

University of Miami

**CENTER FOR ACADEMIC
NAVIGATION & SUCCESS**

2025



**2024-2025
A YEAR IN REVIEW**

A YEAR IN REVIEW

REFLECTIONS & DIRECTION

FROM THE DESK OF VALERIE OLSON

The Center for Academic Navigation & Success leadership team meets weekly, and a standing agenda item is a “leadership moment.” We often rotate responsibility for leading this moment. We also often struggle to keep up with it weekly. A few minutes before one such meeting, I recalled the need to bring the leadership moment. In a mild panic, I closed my eyes to think of something profound. Disparate thoughts raced. When I opened my eyes, my gaze hit my planner (yes, paper planner), and I noticed the inspirational quote for that particular Tuesday. **“Change is not made without inconvenience.” - Richard Hooker**



This is the quote that comes to mind when I think about the 2024-2025 academic year and the launch of the Center for Academic Navigation & Success. I think of this quote, because I know change is difficult. Change is overwhelming. Change is inconvenient. And yet, here we are closing a very successful inaugural year of the Center. Its success is found in the flexibility, collaboration, expertise, innovation, and resilience of Cane Navigators, Transitional Guides, Success Advocates, leaders and campus partners.



Our 24-25 Year in Review publication highlights the collective achievements within the Center to advance University of Miami student success. The results speak volumes and reflect the incredible work and dedication of many. As you browse these pages, you will see that the Center was not just “launched.” It was built by professionals inconvenienced by change but passionate in the pursuit of elevating the academic support students receive! Please take a moment to celebrate the year and marvel at the result of your collective contributions.

In an abundance of gratitude and awe,
Valerie Olson
Senior Associate Dean, Student Success

THE NUMBERS

August 1, 2024 – July 3, 2025

97%

Student satisfaction
post-appointment

84%

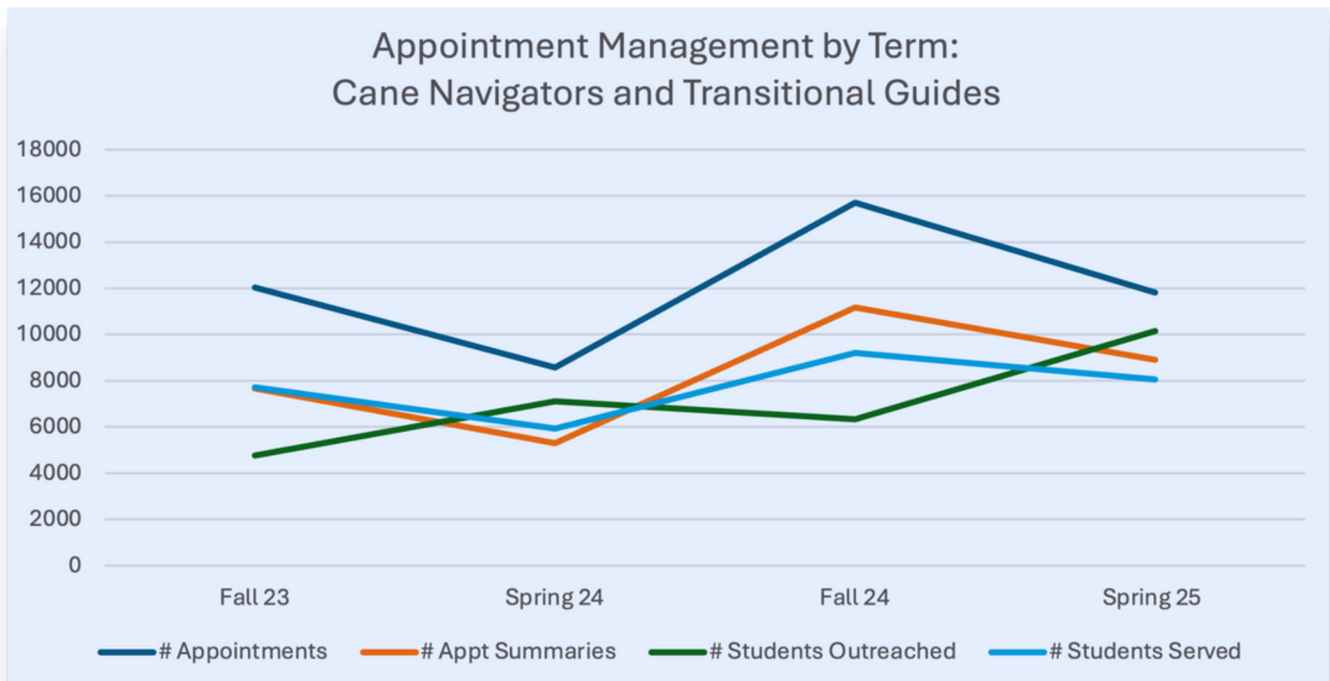
Employee satisfaction
overall experience

64%

Student satisfaction
overall UM advising
experience: up +20%
since Spring 2024

61%

Reported 1-2 business
day staff-to-student
response times: up +13%
since Spring 2024



39,114

Appointments
created

22,386

Scheduled
appointments

9,387

Drop-in
appointments

14,473

Students served:
Up +39% since Spring 2024



LAUNCHING STUDENT SUCCESS

Empowering new students to thrive, the Transitional Guide program has facilitated a smoother transition to university life for over 3,500 incoming students this year.

The Transitional Guide Program provides essential academic support to incoming first-year and transfer students, ensuring they navigate their first year with confidence. By offering personalized advising, course selection guidance, and major exploration resources, the program helps students make informed decisions about their academic paths.

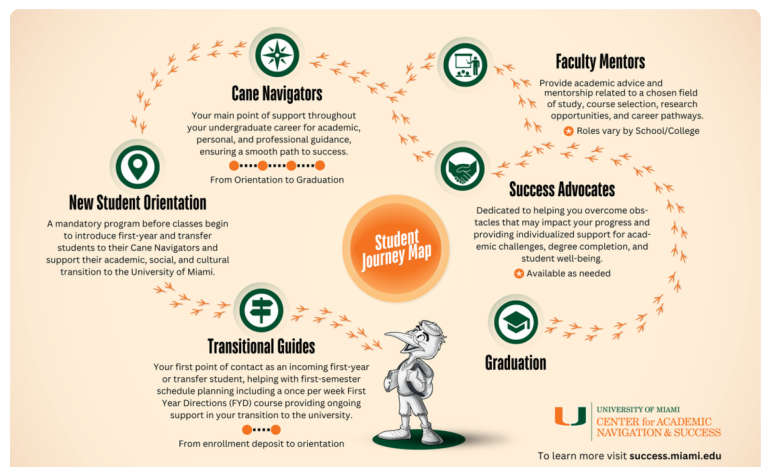
KEY HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACT

Increased Connection: 95% of participating students reported feeling more connected to the UM community after engaging with their Transitional Guide.

Academic Support: Transitional Guides conducted over 2,000 meeting sessions, providing guidance on course selection, academic resources, and study skills.

Collaborative Partnerships:

Strengthened collaborations with the Department of Mathematics and Department of Orientation & Commuter Student Involvement (OCSI) to offer holistic support for incoming students.



DATA SNAP SHOT

3777 +

Students
Served

3875

Advising
Sessions

92%

Student
Satisfaction Rate

LOOKING AHEAD

Expanding Our Reach: This year, we're building on our current services to provide earlier support for students admitted to the spring semester. Our goal is to connect with them proactively, easing their anxiety and helping them feel prepared for a successful first day on campus.





Cane Navigators at the University of Miami are students' primary advisors from orientation to graduation, offering holistic support—academic, personal, and professional—embedded within their schools and colleges.

DATA SNAP SHOT

26,124

advising
appointments
recorded

10,692

unique
students
served

92%

appointment
summaries saved
in Navigate

20%

increased
student
satisfaction

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACT



Restructured and expanded the team: Redefined academic advisor roles as Cane Navigators to unify the student advising experience, and added 18 new team members across departments to work toward a maximum student caseload of 250.

Increased student satisfaction: In their first year, Cane Navigators boosted student satisfaction by 20 points (based on three anonymous surveys) and consistently maintain a 96% satisfaction rate from post-appointment feedback.

Career 'Canes Connect: Cane Navigators responded to high transfer demand into the Miami Herbert Business School by highlighting alternative pathways to success through workshops and panel discussions.

LOOKING AHEAD

Expanding programming for the student exploratory process: It's common for students to explore new interests and ideas in college and we need to strengthen our resources to support students through this process to understand the best academic programs and plans for their educational and career goals. We will launch an inaugural Academic Exploration Week at the start of the fall semester.





The Success Advocates at the University of Miami provide one-on-one support and guidance to students regarding enrollment options, financial support, and success planning. Programs such as FYD, GPAid, First Hires, and Canes Complete help students achieve their academic success goals.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACT

Increased Student Services: Over 4,200 student cases served, including through staff referrals, self-referrals, phone calls, and meetings.

Coordinate Care through Navigate Referrals: Responded to over 400 referrals submitted internally.

Expanded Key Student Success Programming, including:

- **First-Year Directions:** FT23 students retained at a rate 2% higher than non-participants. In Fall 2024, 1,005 FT24 students (42% of the cohort) enrolled in the course.
- **GPAid:** saw 70% participation among eligible students (up from 33%), with participants averaging a 0.95-point GPA increase.
- **First Hires:** Nearly doubled first-semester FWS recipients, with 99% of FT24 participants staying enrolled through Spring 2025.
- **Canes Complete:** Increased graduation 6-year graduation rate by 3.30% percentage points, helping 72 discontinued complete their degree.

DATA SNAP SHOT

4247

Cases
served via
Salesforce

406

Resolved and
processed
staff referrals

76

Students
participated in
GPAid

60

Students
completed
GPAid

LOOKING AHEAD



Expanding programming for at-risk First Year Students: The student success advocates team will build upon existing student success programs to provide additional support to first-year students, leveraging the first-year attrition risk model, coordinated care, and partnerships across the university to increase first-year retention.





First Year Directions (FYD 101) is a one-credit* seminar that helps students navigate campus resources, build study and goal-setting skills, explore careers, and foster wellness, leadership, and belonging.

**The College of Engineering offers FYD as a 0-credit course.*

DATA SNAP SHOT

1203
students
enrolled in FYD
(Fall & Spring)

1016
Fall Term
2024 students
completed FYD

95%
preliminary
retention for
Fall Term 2024
enrolled in FYD

95%
preliminary
persistence for
Spring admits who
took FYD

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACT

Broad Engagement

- 7 schools/colleges participated in FYD.
- 83 sections offered in Fall 2024 and 17 sections in Spring 2025.

Cross-Campus Team

- 90+ staff members, representing over 30 offices on campus, hired as FYD instructors.
- 90+ student leaders on campus hired as FYD TAs.

Immersive Learning

- Increased partnership with **UMverse** by adding a Virtual Reality experience opportunity for FYD students. This effort was recognized by both Forbes and Inside Higher Ed.



LOOKING AHEAD

Broader Engagement, Stronger Insights: Building on FYD's success, we're seeking to expand campus-wide participation and deepen collaboration with key programs and initiatives including Cane Commitment, the Toppel Career Center, and Project Forward. We're also aligning more closely with the Insights Survey, completed by 95% of FYD students in Fall 2025, to better inform and enhance the student experience.





PURPOSE-DRIVEN COLLABORATION

Over the 2024–2025 academic year, four workgroups, **Team**, **Process**, **Service**, and **Professional Development**, have shaped how students experience support across campus.



TEAM PRIORITY GROUP



In Fall 2024, the group proposed professional award categories with clear criteria to celebrate excellence, while fostering collaboration, recognizing staff, and reinforcing the University's DIRECCT values.

To build connection and camaraderie, the group planned a semester-end event with team-building activities, recognition, and professional development, complete with agenda, logistics, and speakers to celebrate achievements and strengthen cross-team bonds.

By Spring 2025, the team had not only launched the Staff Recognition awards nomination process but also spearheaded the first-ever **Student Success Pep Rally Week**, aligning with **NACADA's Global Advising Week**. They further recommended increasing staff visibility by joining residential events like **Coffee with Navigators**, bringing support directly to where students live and engage.



PROCESS PRIORITY GROUP

In Fall 2024, the group set documentation guidelines, established best practices for appointment campaigns, and created tools like a preparation checklist and agenda template to ensure consistent, effective student interactions through Navigate.

Come Spring, they contributed to the development of a Navigate pre-appointment survey and proposed a Center-wide coordinated care referral process, strengthening collaboration between departments and minimizing gaps in student support.

SIDEBAR: AT A GLANCE

Team Priority Group

- Staff awards
- Pep Rally Week
- Community-building events

Process Priority Group

- Navigate documentation guidelines
- Advising tools & templates
- Coordinated care referrals



PURPOSE-DRIVEN COLLABORATION



SERVICE PRIORITY GROUP

In Fall 2024, the group refined post-appointment survey language for clarity and developed a customer service definition and service standards aligned with the University's mission and values including:

- Responding to questions promptly
- Greeting students in a welcoming way during appointments
- Communicating clearly using student-friendly language

These standards were used to improve the **success.miami.edu** website and to create a communication template for Spring 2025 advising appointments.



In Spring 2025, the group helped review the knowledge base for an **AI Knowledge Bot** by contributing to student FAQs. They also reviewed out-of-office messages and recommended ways to make communication more useful. Finally, they advised leadership on how to share important information with parents and guardians to help them support their students.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKGROUP

During Spring 2025, they ensured smooth logistics and breakout session support for the **Student Success Summit**. They also helped develop **Foundations of Cane Navigation** training to improve onboarding and implementation.

The workgroup identified professional development gaps for Fall 2025, suggesting and launching two new initiatives: the **NACADA Watch Party Series**, which brings national best practices into local conversations, and the **Lunch & Learn Series**, offering bite-sized learning on key topics.

SIDEBAR: AT A GLANCE

Service Priority Group

- Customer service standards
- Improved student communications
- AI Knowledge Bot & parent outreach

Professional Development

- Student Success Summit support
- Onboarding & training updates
- New learning series launched

STUDENT SUCCESS CONSORTIUM

A UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUPPORT



The Student Success Consortium brings together departments and offices from across the University to strengthen support for students throughout their academic journey.

Led by the Center for Academic Navigation and Success, the Consortium brings together key campus partners to improve coordination, share strategies, and enhance student support.

The Consortium met twice during Fall 2024 and twice during Spring 2025, with meetings focused on information-sharing, addressing challenges, and exploring new initiatives to support student progress and engagement.

SIDEBAR: AT A GLANCE

Our Campus Partners

- Housing & Residential Life
- Admissions
- Registrar
- Pre-Health Advising
- Undergraduate Research
- Toppel Career Center
- Office of Academic Enhancement

Meeting Cadence:

- 2 sessions in Fall 2024
- 2 sessions in Spring 2025

Recent Highlight:

- Spring 2025 Student Success Summit
(Co-hosted with Toppel)

In collaboration with the Toppel Career Center, the Center for Academic Navigation and Success co-hosted the Spring 2025 Student Success Summit alongside the EAB Regional Summit, welcoming 70+ attendees for two days of keynotes and breakout sessions led by Student Success staff.



The Summit provided a platform for professional development and collaboration across units, highlighting current practices and emerging approaches in academic support, career development, and student engagement. As the Consortium continues its work, it remains focused on strengthening partnerships and improving outcomes for students across the University.

WHAT'S NEXT?

OUR THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

EMPOWERING STUDENT SUCCESS

Our Mission

The Center for Academic Navigation and Success will champion its mission to empower all undergraduate students to excel academically & achieve their educational goals while fostering an inclusive & student-centered culture.

Student Experience

We will deliver a seamless & positive student experience, ensuring every student receives consistent, high-quality support across all touchpoints — from onboarding to graduation.

Retention & Success

We will strengthen student retention, persistence, & completion by leveraging technology & offering proactive, data-based student interventions & services.

Collaboration & Care

We will advance coordinated care, student-centered improvements, & cross-departmental collaboration through strengthening relationships with campus partners & university stakeholders.

Employee Development

We will be a university leader in employee development, satisfaction, & retention.

This strategic plan is our roadmap for creating a more inclusive, connected, and successful experience for every student. We're excited to move forward together.





UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
CENTER for ACADEMIC
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