The COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in so much upheaval and disruption in our lives and the lives of our students - campus closure, a move to online instruction, an uncertainty of when face-to-face instruction will resume, not to mention childcare, healthcare, employment, relationship, and other challenges. The following guidance is offered to support faculty and professional advisors in guiding their students to make informed decisions about their educational experiences during this time.

Contents:

1. Advising principles notions about advising
2. Align your advising practice with advising mission, definition, and student learning outcomes
3. Tips for your remote advising practice
4. Temporary Changes to Academic Deadlines and Policies (Spring 2020)
5. Additional Resources

This guidance is predicated on the following principles and notions:

1. **Be a proactive advisor.** With many changes, various modes of communication, and upheaval in nearly every aspect of life, students need proactive outreach and support from their advisors. Don’t wait for your advisees to come to you. Send clear, explicit, and supportive messaging to your advisees and provide prompt responses.

2. **Adapt your advising practice to a remote setting that is effective for students.** Choose a medium that is effective for you and your advisee. Video (e.g. Zoom) allows you to evaluate non-verbal cues and the screen sharing function allows for clearer communication with the student. However, students may be using a phone, have poor or no connectivity, etc., which will negate the positives of Zoom. The phone or an email exchange may work better for some students.

3. **Make effective referrals** for students who need additional help from their instructors, academic support services, or community resources. Refer to resource options in this document and elsewhere.

4. **Use advising resources effectively (both knowledge and technology resources)**
   b. Advising in Self-Service (in the My NIC portal)
   c. Advising Student Learning Outcomes (below)
   d. Interest Area Faculty and Professional Advisors (See Spring 2020 Advising Notes)
   e. Advising Services website (www.nic.edu/advising)
   f. Transfer Center (www.nic.edu/transfer)
   g. College Catalog (www.nic.edu/catalog)
   h. NIC COVID 19 Updates (https://www.nic.edu/coronavirus)

5. **Ask for help and support.** Advising services, professional advisors, and interest area faculty advisors are available to support you in the development of your advising practice and providing information you need to best advise your students.

6. **Expect the unexpected.** Students may have completely changed their minds about their chosen interest area, coursework, or even attending college right now.
Align your advising practice with advising mission, definition, and student learning outcomes
(some SLOs are in draft form)

Advising Mission
The mission of the NIC advising program is to empower and educate students to clarify their academic interests, make informed decisions, and set and achieve goals for lifelong learning and professional success.

Advising Definition
The NIC advising program is an intentional, collaborative, and inclusive process. With a holistic approach, faculty and professional advisors partner with students in meeting the essential learning outcomes, supporting academic success, and outlining the steps for achievement of the students’ personal, academic, and career goals.

New Student Advising Learning Outcomes - Students will:
1. Become familiar with curriculum and advising resources
2. Understand the basics of course selection in order to make informed decisions
3. Identify clear next steps if class schedule is uncertain or unfinished
4. Access resources to better identify their academic and professional path
5. Know how to use the academic advising program effectively
6. Make a positive connection with a member of the NIC community

Continuing Student Advising Learning Outcomes for (16-45 credits) - Students will:
1. Identify current program pathway requirements, transfer requirements, and career options
2. Draft and update an educational plan to completion in Self-Service related to student’s identified program and transfer pathway
3. Track progress of program degree and transfer requirements
4. Consult an academic and/or career advisor for effective planning
5. Engage with faculty, campus resources, and enrichment opportunities

Graduating/Completing Student Advising Learning Outcomes (46+ credits) - Students will:
1. Prepare for a smooth transition out of NIC by finalizing academic and application requirements for transfer
2. Submit a graduation application
3. Complete their degree requirements and/or transfer requirements
4. Engage with resources designed to prepare for career/gainful employment

Tips for your remote advising practice:
1. Treat the student as a person first. Ask how they are doing with all the changes and upheaval in their lives. Inquire specifically about how they are feeling about the move to virtual education and be encouraging. Ask probing questions to gauge appropriate referrals that could help.
2. Use Aviso for proactive outreach, messaging, and documenting your communication with your advisees. See sample message in the Spring 2020 Advising Notes and the in sample template.
Guidance for faculty advisors re: remote/distance advising
Spring 2020
Produced by Advising Services

a. **Outreach to advisees with low midterm grades or who are on academic probation.** Be sure to check Aviso notes – such advisees have likely connected with an advisor in Advising Services too.

b. **Run the Enrollment Report in Aviso to check which advisees have registered** and those who have not. Continue outreach and encouragement to those who have not registered and are not graduating or transferring.

3. **Set clear expectations for your students and convey useful information.** Include a clear call to action in your messaging to your advisees, and set expectations. Consider referring your advisees to this information to prepare for an advising conversation and be clear about how you prefer your advisees to arrange an advising meeting. Schedule via phone? Email? Follow up with students who do not respond.

4. **Refer to the aforementioned advising student learning outcomes to guide your advising conversation and make sure you’ve covered everything.** Refer to the tools in Self-Service, the program maps in the catalog, and the online transfer center for more information to best guide your advisees.

5. **Refer advisees whose interests no longer align with your area of expertise back to Advising Services.** We can make sure they are connected to an advisor appropriate to their discipline.

6. **Document and refer using Aviso.** There are many changes, updates, and new supports for students this semester. Stay updated through email and thorough review of the COVID 19 updates page.

7. **From an instructor perspective, use Aviso to send and document a message using Aviso.** Check out this video created by Aaron Cloyd to demonstrate.

**Temporary Changes to Academic Deadlines and Policies (Spring 2020)**

**Online instruction**
Most instruction will be delivered virtually for the remainder of the semester. Classes and labs that are online resume on Monday, April 6. The updated list of classes that have been moved to online instruction can be found at nic.edu/onlinecourses.

**Withdraw deadline extended to April 17 / Withdraw process changed**
The process for dropping or withdrawing from classes has changed. Students wishing to withdraw from one or more courses cannot do so in Self-Service; they must complete the Online Withdraw Process form.

**Registration appointments and dates remain unchanged**
Check the calendar and the student’s self-service for more info.

**Spring semester has been extended to May 21**
Spring semester has been extended by one week to make-up for the time for the extended spring break. The last official day for final exams is now Thursday, May 21. Advise students to consult with instructor regarding how the semester extension will affect the course.

Draft April 15, 2020
Finals information
Final exam schedules are to be identified by April 6. Not all courses are expected to have a scheduled final examination. Finals that are held will be either through remote test proctoring or another arrangement, but will not be held in-person.

Students in courses with essential in-person requirements will receive incomplete grade
Courses with essential in-person requirements cannot be completed this spring. Students in those courses will be notified of an incomplete grade no later than April 10. These incompletes can be made up during summer session or fall term based on our ability to reopen campus. Many students are confused but what an “Incomplete” means. Here’s the description from the catalog:

Incompletes
An incomplete is assigned only if the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work to within three weeks of the end of the semester (or proportional length of time for a course of less than a semester in length). Incompletes are issued only in cases of extenuating circumstances, such as severe illness or injury. Incompletes are not issued in cases in which the student is simply unable to complete his/her work within the specified semester or session. If a final grade of I is recorded, the instructor will indicate in writing to the Registrar’s Office what the student must do to make up the deficiency. The instructor will indicate in the written statement what permanent grade should be entered if the incomplete is not removed by the deadline.

All incomplete grades must be removed within six weeks after the first class day of the following term, excluding the Summer Session. If the incomplete is not removed by that date, the grade reverts to the grade indicated by the instructor’s written statement authorizing the incomplete. Incompletes may affect financial aid eligibility and will prevent certificates or degrees from being awarded.

Summer session begins June 1.
Summer session will begin for all courses and programs, including CTE courses, on Monday June 1. Most offerings are expected to be online, but some face-to-face courses will be planned for summer. Expect frequent changes and updates to the summer course offerings. If the campus cannot be reopened this summer due to continuing COVID-19 health risks or other directives, face-to-face classes, including incompletes from spring semester, will be offered in the fall. Advise students registering for summer classes with face-to-face components that those components may be cancelled or delayed.

NIC Commencement for 2020 has been canceled.
NIC is considering and will announce ways to celebrate students’ graduation. Some ideas include virtual parties or a future department or college commencement program.

Math Placement
As of Monday, March 23, NIC closed its testing center where proctored math placement assessments are typically administered. On Wednesday, April 15, NIC implemented virtual proctored assessments for math placement. According to the NIC Math department, only proctored attempts count towards placement. If a student doesn’t have the necessary technology for the remote proctoring, they must wait until campus reopens to take a proctored assessment. Students in this situation, without necessary
technology for remote proctoring, should contact the Math Education Center (mathedcenter@nic.edu) to determine possible next steps (which may or may not include access to an unproctored attempt).

**Student Resources Available**
Resources may be accessed for students in need due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information, including a link to an application for emergency funds, is available [here](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/23/advisers-will-need-develop-new-means-working-students-given-covid-19-opinion).

**Holds and Special Permission**
Current students who have not yet submitted an official high school transcript are reminded to do so, but will not be held from registration until it is submitted and processed.

Students not in good academic standing must have course-by-course approval for any registration activity. Generally, advisors in Advising Services are supporting these students.

**Student Grading Option – requesting S/U grading instead of letter grading**
Students are afforded the opportunity to request a change in how their current courses are graded – to switch from an A-F grading system to a S/U grading system. All details of this process are outlined [here](https://www.ucollege.txstate.edu/advising/about/Letter-to-Our-Students.html). Students and advisors are recommended carefully review the FAQs to make an informed decision about this request.

**Withdraw due to COVID19 Process**
Students are afforded the special option to withdraw from one or all courses they are currently enrolled in between April 6, 2020 and April 17, 2020 with no negative impact to GPA. Withdraw during these dates will give students a tuition credit at North Idaho College in either the upcoming fall 2020 or spring 2021 term. This credit will cover tuition only. Students will be responsible for fees. More information is available [here](https://www.ucollege.txstate.edu/advising/about/Letter-to-Our-Students.html).

**Coming cohort/block scheduling options for new students in Fall 2020**

**Additional Resources**

- National Academic Advising Association ([https://nacada.ksu.edu/](https://nacada.ksu.edu/))
- Well-written letter from advisors to students: [https://www.ucollege.txstate.edu/advising/about/Letter-to-Our-Students.html](https://www.ucollege.txstate.edu/advising/about/Letter-to-Our-Students.html)