



Overview

The primary objective of Wayfinders is to assist new students, both first-year and transfer, in understanding their academic options and to aid them in effectively navigating the organization of the university. Wayfinders are some of UArizona's most dynamic and engaging academic advisors who specialize in helping students find their academic home as soon as possible during their time at the university.

Wayfinders began in Fall 2019 as one of four academic advising initiatives included in The University of Arizona's Strategic Plan. Initial student interactions were in-person via tabling events on campus, drop-in advising at student cultural and resource centers, and computer labs during priority registration. Spring 2020 was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in all student outreach moving to the virtual arena, where it remains at the present time.

Assessment Goals

The purpose of this assessment is three-fold: 1) determine a profile of a Wayfinders Participant student as compared to the UArizona general student population, 2) determine if there is any change in the demographics of Wayfinders Participants pre-COVID and post-COVID, and 3) gauge campus awareness of the Wayfinders program among targeted campus departments.

Key Definitions

A Wayfinders Participant is any student who has participated in at least one Wayfinders programming event or interaction. Pre-COVID is defined as any interaction on or before March 13, 2020. Post-COVID is any interaction on March 14, 2020 through the end of the Fall 2020 semester.

Methods

Wayfinders Participant data was collected pre-COVID via CatCard swipes during in-person programming in Fall 2019 and early Spring 2020. Post-COVID Wayfinders participant data was collected via email correspondences and Zoom meeting registrations. UArizona general student population data was based on the Academic Year 2019-2020 UArizona Student Census. Campus awareness of the Wayfinders program was determined via a Qualtrics survey conducted in March 2021.

Results

Table 1. shows ***the typical Wayfinders Participant is more likely to be first-year (+22%), female (+15%), Honors (+7%), Pell recipient (+18%), Merit Aid recipient (+35%), and minoritized (+6%) than the typical UArizona student.*** Table 2. shows that during the post-COVID period, ***Wayfinders Participants became increasingly female (+8%), Arizona resident (+5%), Honors (+4%), and Pell recipient (+7%), while remaining virtually unchanged in terms of ethnicity.***

Additional Key Data Points and Takeaways



- 74% of Wayfinders Participants are first-year or sophomores, aligning with our goal of reaching students early in their UArizona career.
- Wayfinders programming is reaching lower income students, and that percentage grew during the post-COVID time period.
- Wayfinders Participants represented 91 of the University's 310 undergraduate majors, indicating student outreach is inclusive of many degree plans

Table 1. Wayfinders Participants Compared to UArizona General Student Population

The below table includes the demographics of Wayfinders Participants and a comparison population of main campus undergraduates derived from the Fall 2019 census.

Demographics	Wayfinders Participant (N = 303)	UArizona Student (N = 37,923)
First-Year	51% (n = 155)	29% (n = 11,028)
Female	68% (n = 205)	53% (n = 20,210)
Male	32% (n = 98)	47% (n = 17,693)
Arizona Resident	64% (n = 193)	61% (n = 22,987)
Non-Resident	36% (n = 110)	39% (n = 14,936)
Honors	20% (n = 62)	13% (n = 5,025)
Pell Recipient	42% (n = 126)	24% (n = 9,180)
Merit Aid Recipient	68% (n = 206)	33% (n = 12,682)
Hispanic	31% (n = 93)	26% (n = 9,962)
Non-White	59% (n = 180)	53% (n = 19,958)

Table 2. Wayfinders Participants Pre-COVID Compared to Post-COVID

The table below compares the demographics of Wayfinders Participants during the pre-COVID and post-COVID time periods.

Demographics	Pre-COVID (N = 183)	Post-COVID (N = 120)
First-Year	54% (n = 99)	47% (n = 56)
Female	65% (n = 118)	73% (n = 87)
Male	35% (n = 65)	27% (n = 33)
Arizona Resident	62% (n = 113)	67% (n = 80)
Non-Resident	38% (n = 70)	33% (n = 40)
Honors	19% (n = 34)	23% (n = 28)
Pell Recipient	39% (n = 71)	46% (n = 55)
Merit Aid Recipient	70% (n = 128)	65% (n = 78)
Hispanic	31% (n = 57)	30% (n = 36)
Non-White	59% (n = 108)	60% (n = 72)

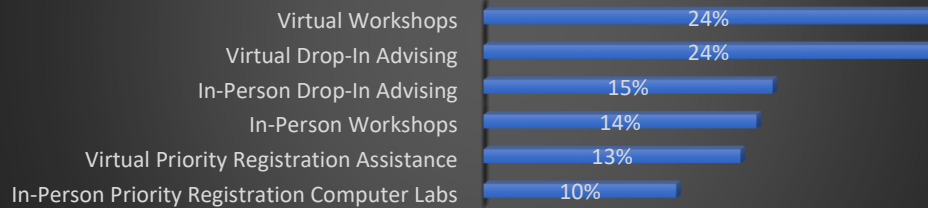
Wayfinders Awareness Survey

In early March 2021, a Qualtrics survey was sent out to targeted campus departments to gauge awareness of the Wayfinders program. Departments were selected based on the anticipated fit between their student cohort and Wayfinders student outreach expertise with first-year and transfer students. 92 surveys were completed out of the approximately 350 sent out (~26%). Three core “yes or no” questions were asked, with two additional questions accompanying a “yes” response to question 3 regarding programming methods and contact information.

Results

- Question 1: 67 respondents (73%) had heard of Wayfinders prior to taking the survey.
- Question 2: 66 respondents (72%) said their department utilized academic advising-related content in its programming.
- Question 3: 66 respondents (72%) said their department would be interested in general academic advising support from Wayfinders if it was available.
- Question 4: Respondents indicated their preferred modality of programming, with a caveat of in-person options being available based on university safety protocols.

Programming Modality Preferences (N=118)



- Of those who responded “yes” to question 3, 15 provided contact information, representing the following departments:

American Indian Studies	Hydrology & Atmospheric Sciences
Campus Recreation – Aquatics	Native American Student Affairs
C.A.T.S. Academics	Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences	School of Art
College of Public Health - Phoenix	Student Engagement & Career Development (3)
Housing & Residential Life (2)	Undergraduate Admissions

Key Takeaways from Wayfinders Awareness Survey

- In less than two years, Wayfinders has gained the awareness of nearly three-fourths of the departments targeted by the survey. This is no small feat considering the relative newness of the program and considering the difficulties inherent in gaining traction during the post-COVID time period.
 - Most departments (72%) utilize academic advising-themed programming in some fashion. The challenge is to make our services available to those who have expressed an interest in Wayfinders support.
 - Of the 118 responses selecting preferred modality of programming, 61% chose virtual over in-person options.
 - The 15 departments who provided contact information and who made specific support requests confirm that ***the Wayfinders program will need to expand beyond our current numbers*** (10 advisors) if we hope to deliver on the promise of serving them (and those we have already partnered with) adequately.

