UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA

UTM Proactive, Holistic Advising Pilots



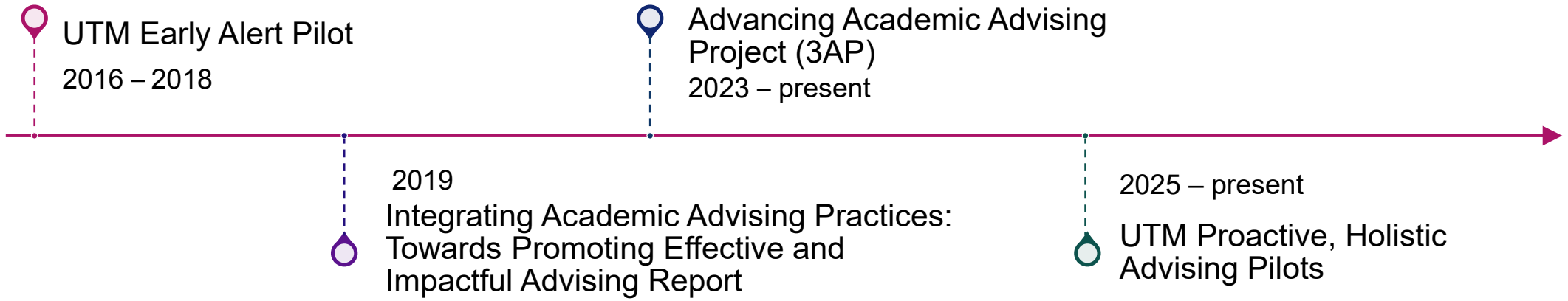
September 10, 2026
UTM Academic Affairs Committee

Scott Clarke
Manager, Enrolment, Retention & Strategic Initiatives
Office of the Registrar, UTM

DEFY GRAVITY

Background

- Improving retention & graduation rates is required to meet UTM enrolment targets.
  - 90% Year 1 – Year 2 retention rate.
  - 75% 7-year graduation rate.
- Academic advising is a critical tool to support student success and progression to graduation.
  - 68% of UTM students identify "lack of good academic advising" as an obstacle to academic progress.*



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*2023 NSSE Report

UTM Proactive, Holistic Advising Pilots



- Since 2025, the Office of the Registrar has initiated nine pilot projects to assess the impact of proactive, holistic advising for high-risk students.
- All pilots are conducted using an RCT-style experimental design.

GOAL

1. Improve Year 1 – Year 2 retention.
2. Reduce academic probation and suspension after Year 1.

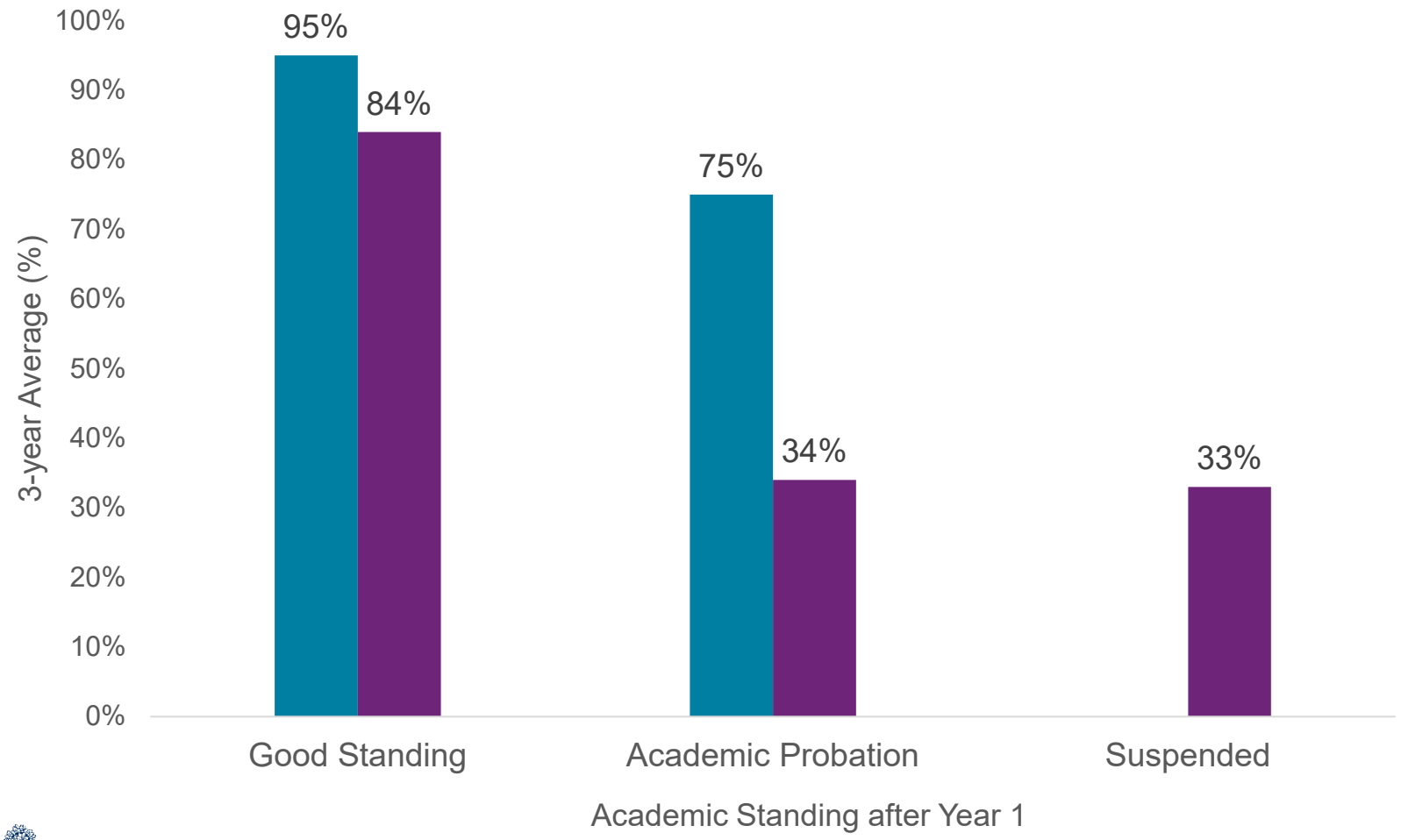


TARGET POPULATIONS

1. **Predictive:** Low admission average (within acceptable range)
2. **Early Alert:** Low first-term SGPA
3. **High-Risk:** Academic probation after Year 1

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Importance of First Year Success: Academic Standing



1/4
on probation **do not return for Year 2**

2/3
on probation or suspension after Y1 **do not graduate in 7 years**

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Low First-Term SGPA

Proactive, Holistic Advising Pilot

Winter & Summer 2025

Target Population

Year 1 students with a first-term sessional GPA below 1.85. (n. 1008)

- Additional support for students on probation and enrolled in a summer course.

Pilot Cohorts

Control: Standard academic advising

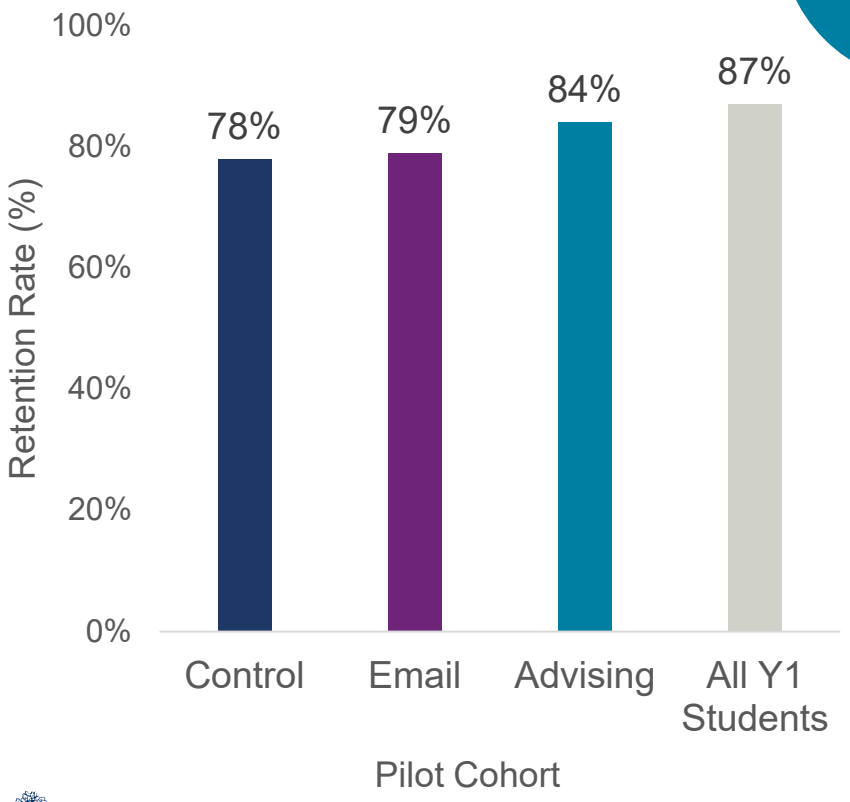
Email Treatment: Standard advising + proactive email support

Proactive Advising Treatment: Standard advising + dedicated academic advisor.

Key Outcomes

Year 1 to Year 2 Retention

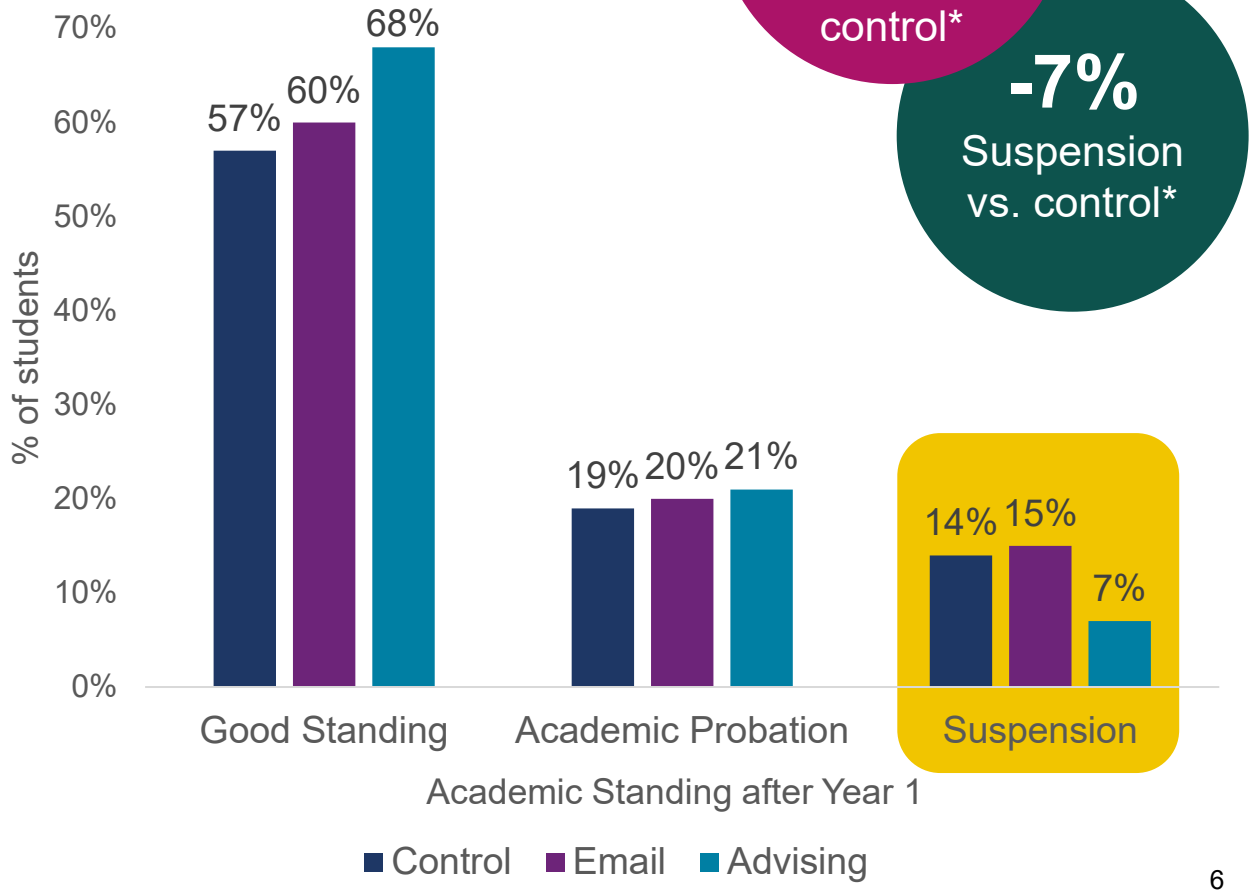
+6% Retained vs. control*



Academic Standing after Year 1

+11% Good standing vs. control*

-7% Suspension vs. control*



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* Statistically significant difference

Low Admission Average

Proactive, Holistic Advising Pilot

Summer, Fall 2025 & Winter 2026

Target Population

First-year, new–to-UTM students admitted into Commerce, Management and Social Sciences with admission averages in the lower-half of their admission category.
(n. 985)

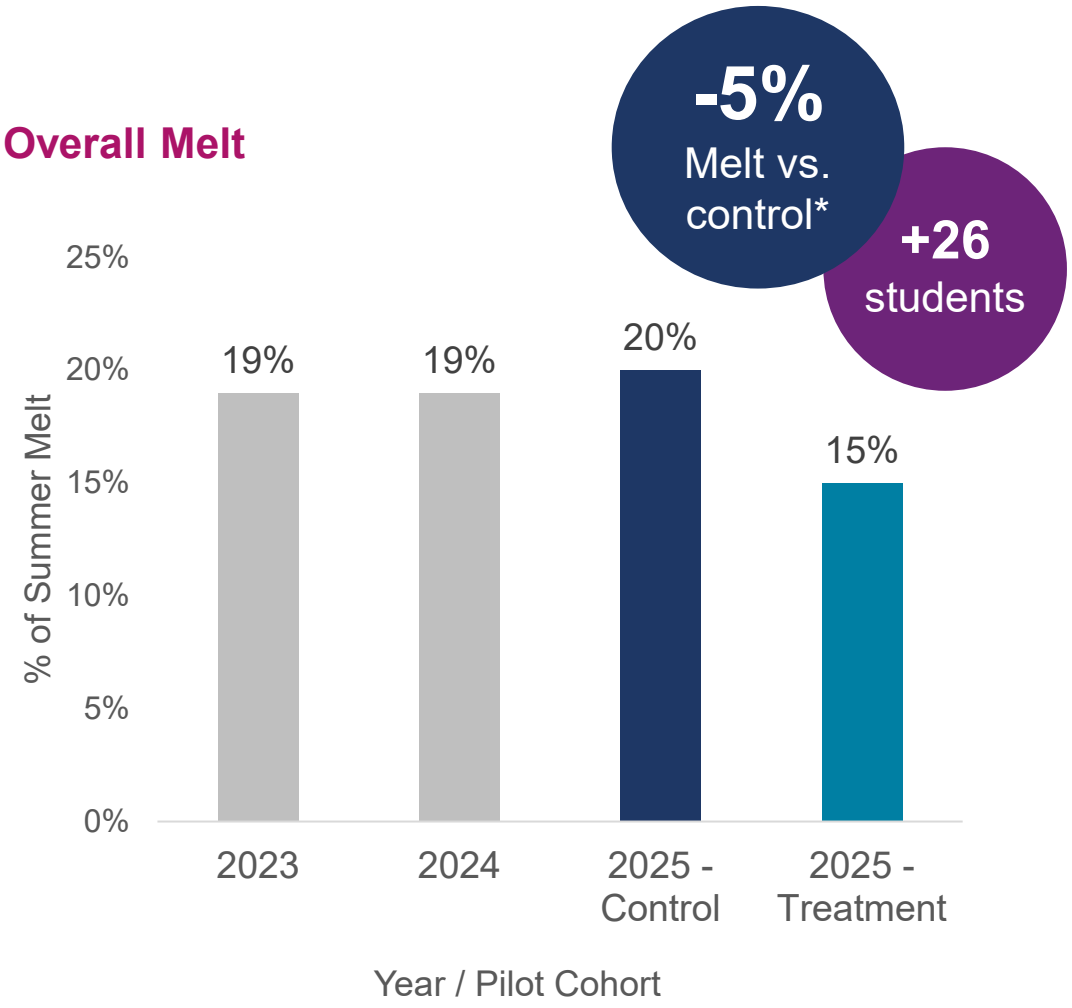
Pilot Cohorts

Control: Standard academic advising

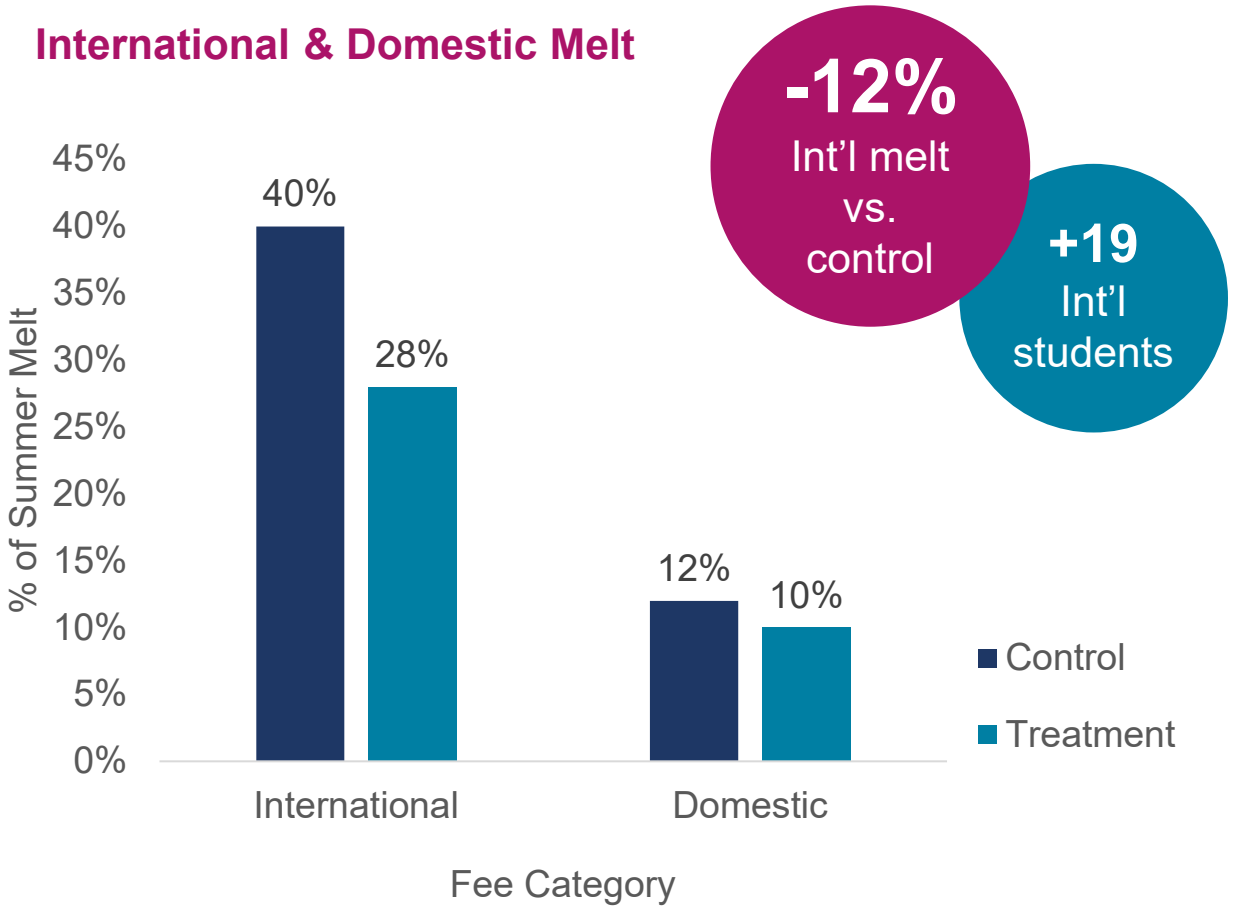
Treatment: Standard advising + dedicated academic advisor.

Key Outcome: Summer Melt

Overall Melt



International & Domestic Melt

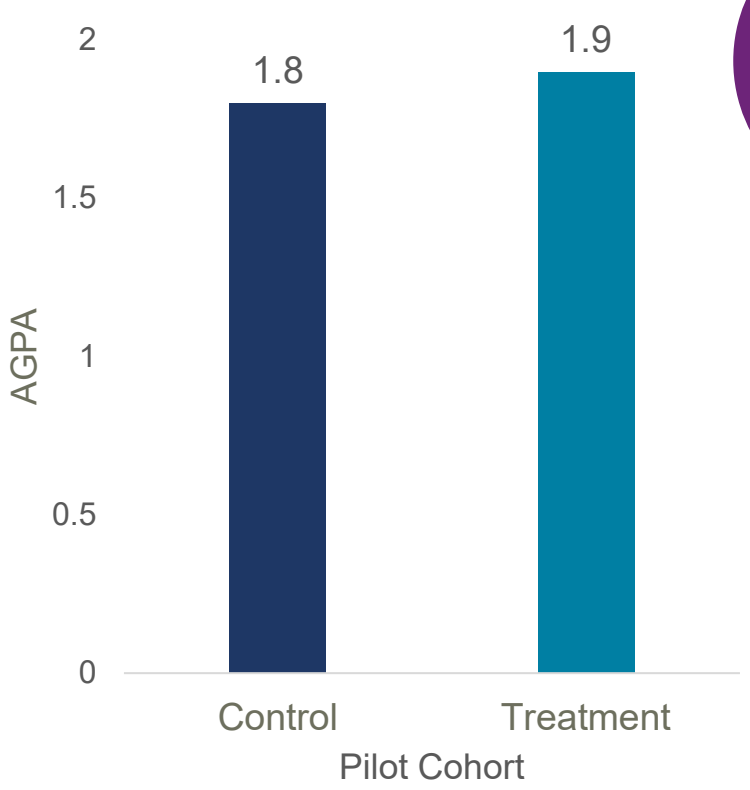


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* Statistically significant difference

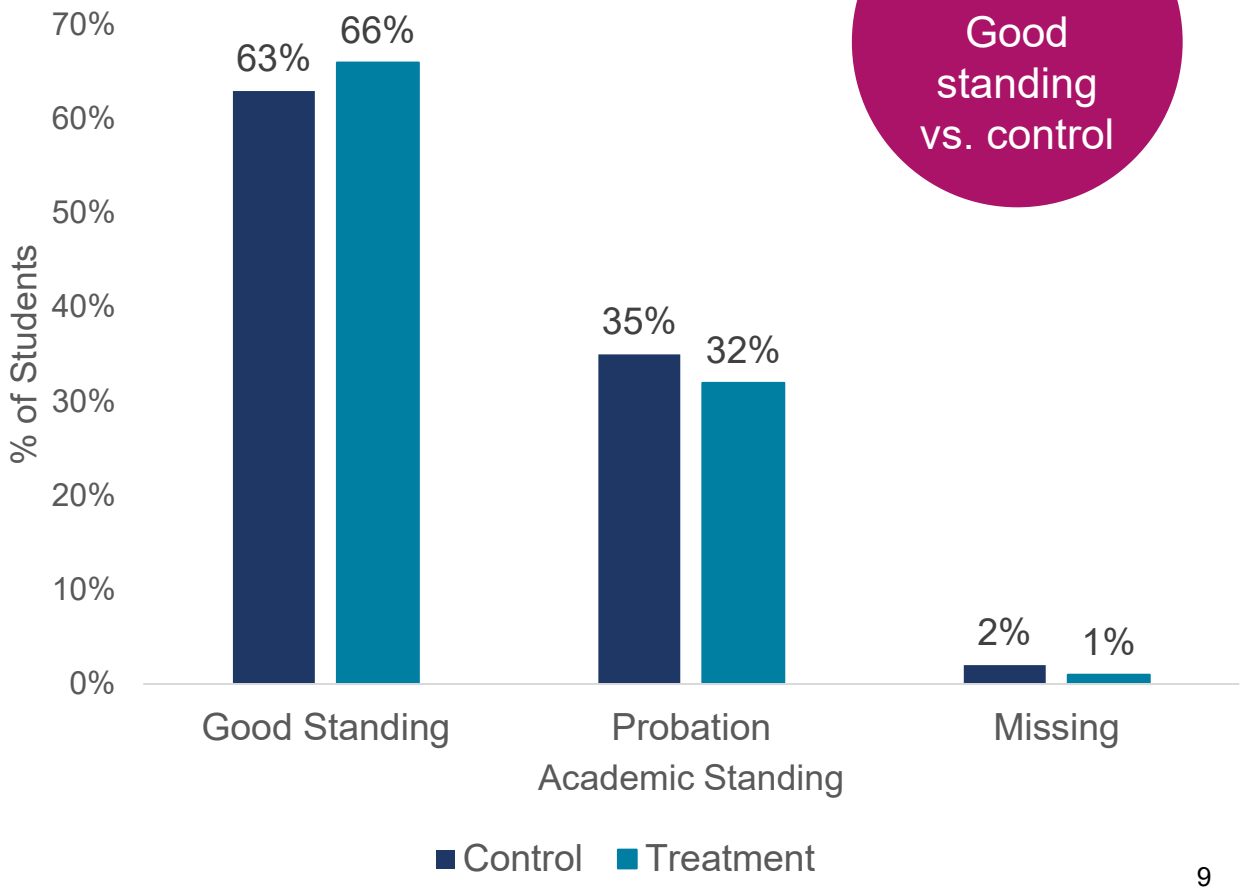
Key Outcomes: Year 1 Academic Performance

Year 1 Annual GPA



+0.1
AGPA
vs.
control

Year 1 Academic Standing

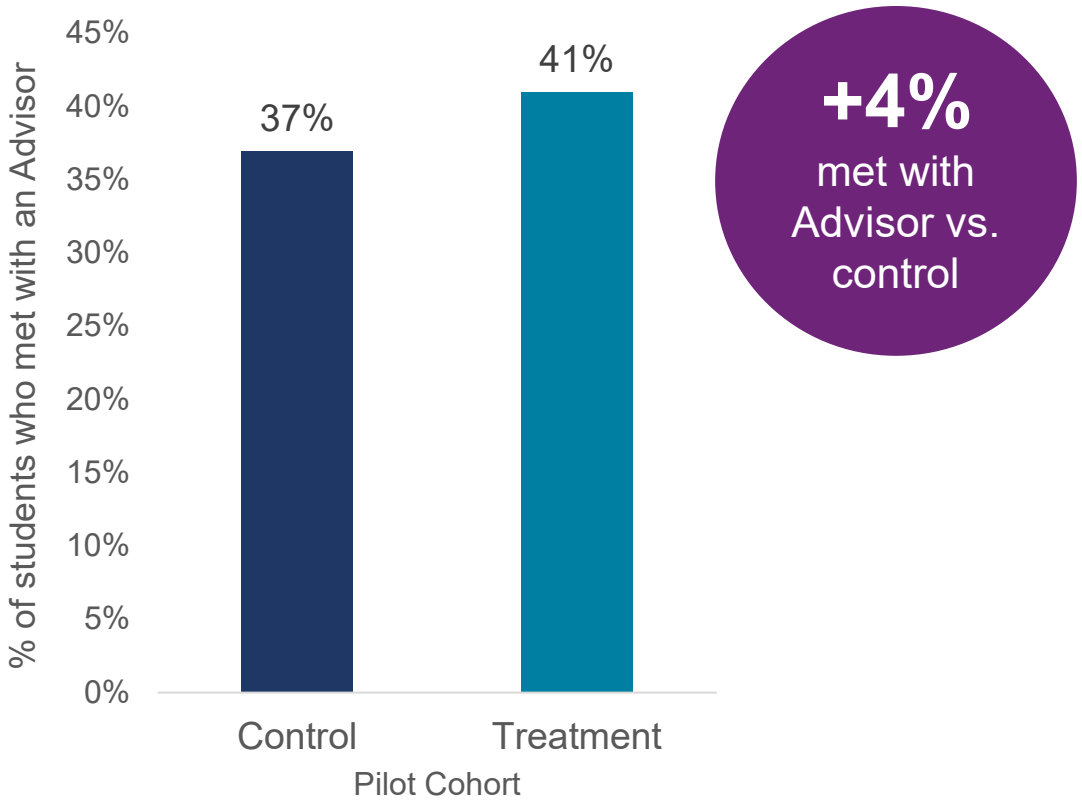


+3%
Good
standing
vs. control

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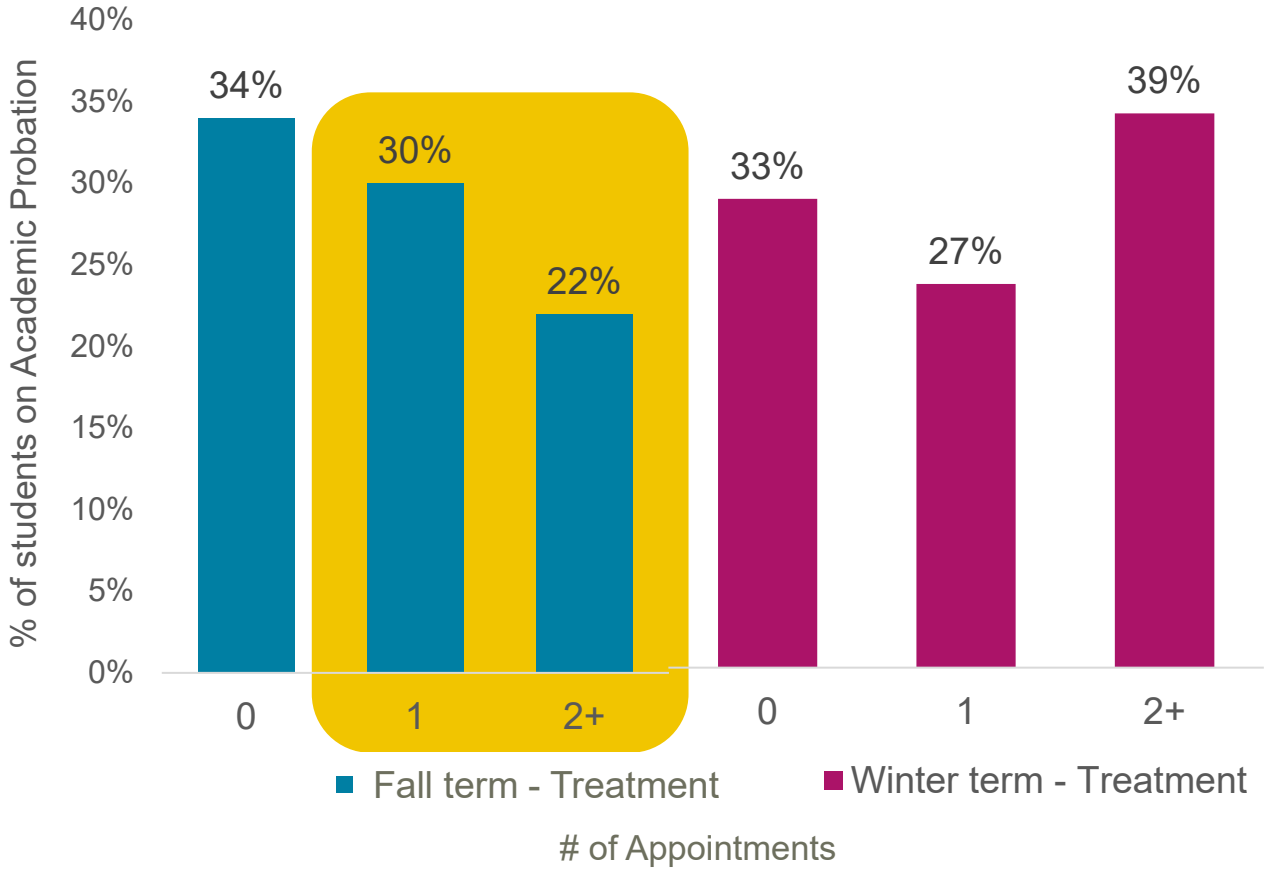
Key Outcomes: Academic Advising Engagement

Met with an Academic Advisor during Year 1



+4%
met with Advisor vs. control

Probation Rate by # of Advising Appointments



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Key Insights

1. **Greatest impact:** Targeted, early interventions to specific high-risk indicators.

2. **Key intervention:** Support students in assessing in-term grades and make informed decisions to access support and/or drop, CR/NCR or LWD.

3. **Biggest Surprise:** Results are promising, though limited by lack of uptake.
    - Barriers extend beyond availability or personalized advisor.

4. **Limitation:** Ability to leverage early risk indicators, such as Quercus inactivity, missed first quiz, class absences, low first midterm grade, etc.

5. **Key to future success:** Enhanced collaboration between Office of the Registrar, academic units, faculty members, Data Strategy and Analytics and support resources (RGAC, CSE etc.) to support proactive outreach.





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Questions?

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