

STUDENT-ATHLETE SUPPORT PLAN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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Director of Football Academics, Athletics

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PURPOSE

- Ensure appropriate academic support for all student-athletes
- Assign services more efficiently for incoming students
- Measure student readiness over time
- Improve support across entire student-athlete population



PEOPLE INVOLVED

- **Sponsor**

- **Charlie Ball**, Senior Associate Athletics Director for Academics



- **Team Members**

- **Justin Light**, Director of Football Academics
- **Charlie Ramage**, Assistant Director of Enrichment Services
- **Johnathan Spicer**, Academic Advisor



PROJECT PATH: DISCOVERY

- Analyzed 5 semesters of Student Learning Profiles
- Mapped current process
- Identified delays, inconsistencies, and lack of transparency
- Evaluated impact on student-athlete outcomes

 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA 	
Student:	Sport:
Learning Specialist:	Semester:
Semester GPA:	Cum GPA:

Evaluation Terminology		
Deficient	0	Student is learning strategies pertaining to skill area. Student still needs continuous practice on strategy and cannot identify or apply strategies to skill area independently.
Developing with Guidance & Intervention	1	Student has understanding of strategies pertaining to skill area but needs direction and assistance in application in contextual situations.
Developing towards Independence	2	Student is able to self-start and progress in skill area with very little assistance. Student can identify and apply strategies to perform skill area almost independently.
Self-Sufficient	3	Student is able to perform skill area with complete self-regulation. If assistance is needed, student will ask.

Reading:	
Able to read required texts, notes, presentations, etc. as assigned for class	
Able to use a strategy to locate, read, and organize researched information to increase reading comprehension	
Has a working vocabulary and/or phonetic ability/uses phonics to decode unknown words	
When reading texts, notes and/or power point presentations is able to comprehend a variety of words in context	
Can connect information, paraphrase and/or summarize ideas about people, places, or events from text, notes and/or power point	
Reading Total	

PROJECT PATH: DISCOVERY

Fall 2025 SLP Data		
Scoring Gap	Total	Accurate
Accurate	9	20.93%
1 category off	10	Severely Inaccurate
2 categories off	19	55.81%
3 categories off	5	
Total	43	

Fall 2024 SLP Data		
Scoring Gap	Total	Accurate
Accurate	17	36.96%
1 category off	18	Severely Inaccurate
2 categories off	9	23.91%
3 categories off	2	
Total	46	

Fall 2023 SLP Data		
Scoring Gap	Total	Accurate
Accurate	24	46.15%
1 category off	18	Severely Inaccurate
2 categories off	10	19.23%
3 categories off	0	
Total	52	

Spring 2025 SLP Data		
Scoring Gap	Total	Accurate
Accurate	3	17.65%
1 category off	7	Severely Inaccurate
2 categories off	5	41.18%
3 categories off	2	
Total	17	

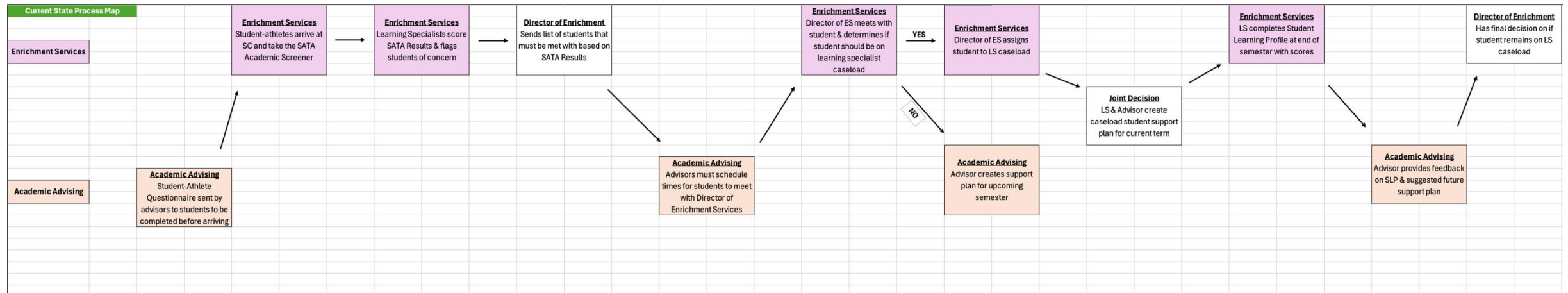
Spring 2024 SLP Data		
Scoring Gap	Total	Accurate
Accurate	18	38.30%
1 category off	16	Severely Inaccurate
2 categories off	13	27.66%
3 categories off	0	
Total	47	

Screening Meetings Turnaround Time	
Semester	Length to Complete Screening Meetings
Fall 2025	1 month
Spring 2025	2 months
Fall 2024	1 month
Spring 2024	1 month
Fall 2023	1+ month

Current Process
<i>Student-Athlete Population Affected/Assessed every semester</i>
Less than 10%



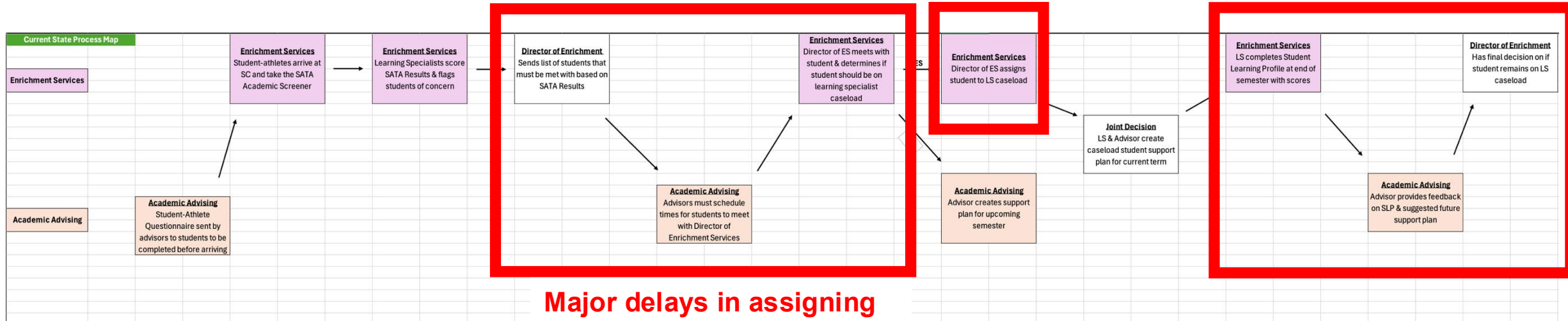
PROJECT PATH: DISCOVERY



PROJECT PATH: DISCOVERY

Decisions lie with one person and decision/process has not been transparent

Scoring for SLPs rarely aligns with suggested academic support plan; only caseload students scored



Major delays in assigning support occur due to scheduling meetings and students missing meetings



PROJECT PATH: PLANNING

- Built system tailored to USC student-athletes
- Developed support recommendations by risk level
- Finalized future-state process map

Recommended Services:
Mid-semester Grade Checks
Progress Reports 2 times a semester
Content Tutors and/or Academic Coaches by Request
Priority Advising
First year students, Objective based Study Hall
First year students, Weekly or Biweekly meetings
First year students, Weekly or Biweekly grade checks

Recommended Services:
Weekly or Biweekly grade checks
Required Objective Based Study Hall as determined by Dodie Advisor
Progress Reports
Priority Advising
Required Objective Sheets
Assigned Content Tutors and/or Academic Coaches
For First year students, Weekly Meeting with Dodie Advisor

Recommended Services:
Daily Monitoring by Dodie Advisor (class attendance, grade tracking, session attendance)
Required Objective Based Study Hall as determined by Dodie Advisor
3x per week or more with Learning Specialist
Progress Reports 2 times a semester
Meet and use SDRC if applicable
Required Objective Sheets
Assigned Content Tutors and/or Academic Coaches
Priority Advising



KEY IMPROVEMENTS

Incoming Student-Athlete Risk Assessment

- All incoming freshmen & transfers will be scored based on incoming student-athlete questionnaire, SATA scores, high school, and personal information.
- Students support plan will be implemented based on the collected data and scoring.

PROJECTED RESULTS

- Support plans and caseload assignments for student-athletes will become more consistent and transparent and be data-driven.
- Students assigned to caseload 1-2 weeks sooner with elimination of initial meeting.



KEY IMPROVEMENTS

Incoming Student Rubric

Category	Point Max	Risk Factor(s)/Criteria
Academic	2	<p>High School</p> <p>HS Core GPA < 3.0- +2 points or HS Core GPA < 2.5 - +4 points or Academic Redshirt - +6 points</p> <p>Transfer</p> <p>Cumulative GPA < 3.0 - +2 points or Cumulative GPA < 2.5 - +4 points or Concern regarding meeting PTD - Auto Red Contract Admit - Auto Red</p>
USC Admissions (Freshmen Only)	2	<p>Special Admit - +2 points</p>
Initial Screener	4	<p>1 point for each score 8th grade or below up to 4 points</p> <p>Recommend for further testing or 4 or more deficiencies from initial screener - +4 points</p>
Diagnostic	3	Diagnosed with LD, ADHD, or Psycho-Social Disorder - +3 points if diagnosed
Roles of Academics	4	<p>Known lack of academic motivation or History of missed work, absences from class, excessive tardiness, etc. +1 point per concern (4 max)</p>
Personal History	4	<p>First-generation college student or Low Financial Resources or <u>Student is homesick/first time being away from home - +1 point per concern</u> Substance abuse, health concerns, or family concerns (caretaker for child/parent, death in the family, etc.) - +1 point per concern</p>
Language	1	English as a second language - +1 point
Sport	1	<p>Team environment does not prioritize academics or High profile athlete or Recent coaching change - +1 point 2-4 transfer - +1 point</p>
Transfers	2	Multiple undergraduate transfers (2-4, 4-4, 4-2-4) - +2 points
Total		0-4 = low risk , 5-8 = moderate risk , 9+ = high risk



KEY IMPROVEMENTS

Returning Student-Athlete Risk Assessment

- All student-athletes will be scored based on results in college, growth as a student, and personal risk factors.
- Students support plan implemented based on the collected data and scoring.

PROJECTED RESULTS

- All student-athletes evaluated continuously throughout their academic career, as opposed to only students who had been on a learning specialist caseload.
- Students who display trends that may affect their academics will be evaluated regularly to ensure support is at ideal level relative to where the student presents.



KEY IMPROVEMENTS

Returning Student Rubric

Category	Point Max	Risk Factor(s)/Criteria
Academic	2 or 4	<p>Current cumulative GPA < 2.2 or Last term GPA < 2.2 or Academically ineligible within the past year - +4 points</p> <p>Current Cumulative GPA < 3.0 or Last Term GPA < 3.0 - +2 points</p> <p>Contract Extended students - Auto Red</p>
Diagnostic	3	Diagnosed with LD, ADHD, or Psycho-Social Disorder - +3 points if diagnosed
Roles of Academics	4	<p>Displays negative attitude towards academics/major/degree or History of TAC no-shows, missed assignments, class absences, excessive tardiness, or Academic Conduct cases</p> <p>+1 point per concern (4 max)</p>
Personal History	4	<p>First-generation college student or Low Financial Resources or Student is homesick/first time being away from home - +1 point per concern Substance abuse, health concerns, or family concerns (caretaker for child/parent, death in the family, etc.) - +1 point per concern</p>
Reading/Writing Skills	2	<p>Learning Specialist/Advisor has documented concern for reading or writing skill - +1 point or D/F in ENGL 101, ENGL 102, or writing intensive course - +2 points</p>
Math Skills	2	<p>D in MATH 111/115 or STAT 110/201 - +1 point or Repeat in any MATH/STAT course - +2 points</p>
Language	1	English as a second language - +1 point
Sport	1	<p>Team environment does not prioritize academics or High profile athlete or Recent coaching change - +1 point</p>
Total		0-4 = low risk , 5-8 = moderate risk , 9+ = high risk



KEY IMPROVEMENTS

Student-Athlete Meetings No Longer Delay Process

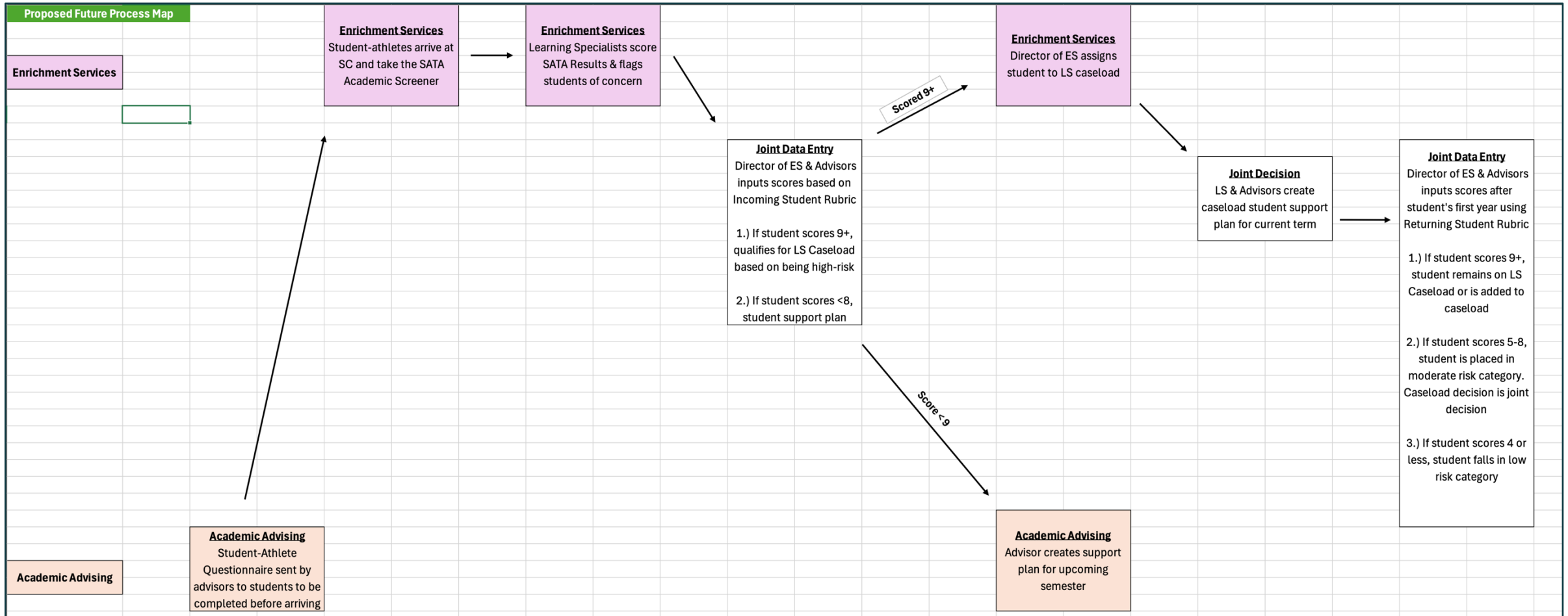
- Student-athletes will not have to meet with Director of Enrichment to be assigned to their support level.
- Incoming questionnaire/data collected will be sufficient for support plan assignment.

PROJECTED RESULTS

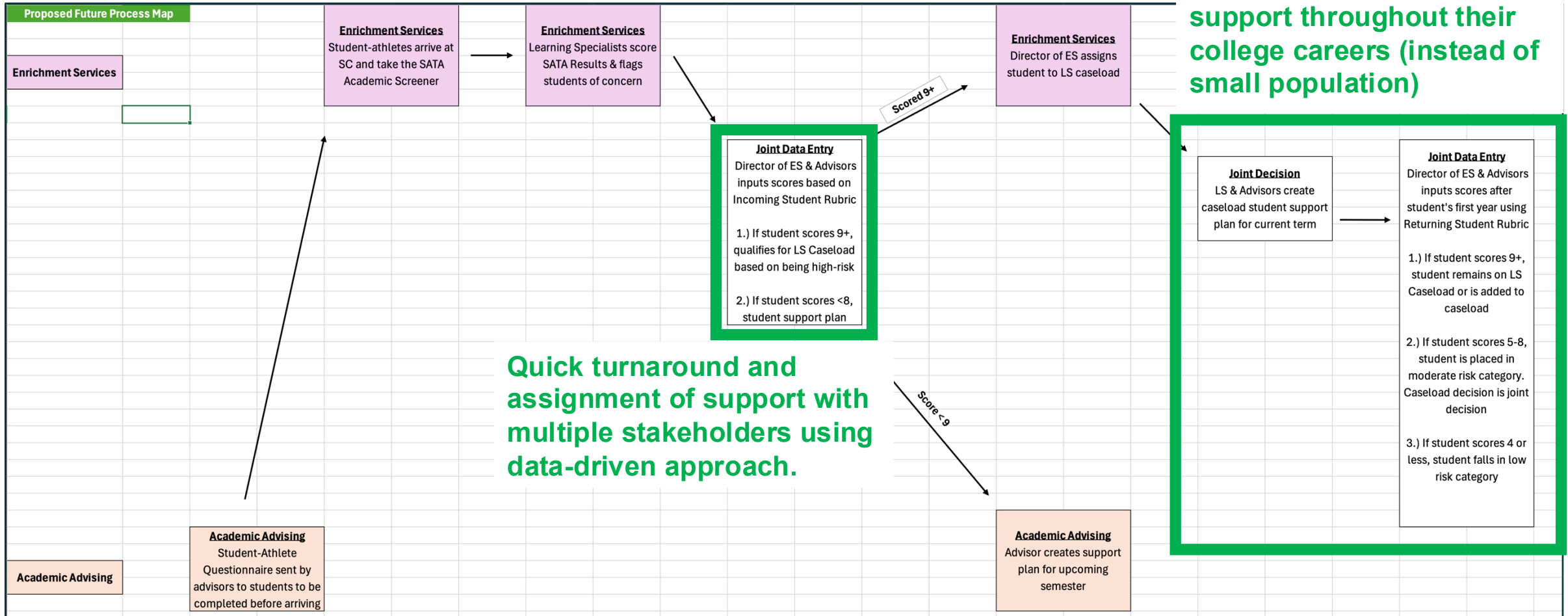
- Students will be assigned to learning specialist caseload within days of arrival once all data has been collected.
- Students not assigned to caseload will be assigned appropriate support services quicker due to no longer waiting on initial meeting results.



PROJECT PATH: PLANNING



PROJECT PATH: PLANNING



RESULTS

BEFORE	AFTER
Approval Delays: Delays occur frequently due to students being required to meet 1-on-1 with Director of Enrichment Services before support plan is finalized	Rapid Assignment: Students can be assigned to a learning specialist caseload or other levels of support within days of completing SATA testing
Limited Transparency: Lack of consistent transparency in decision-making process with learning specialist caseload assignment	Data-Guided Assignment: New system will establish a baseline for services based on ongoing assessment of performance, skills, and risk
Limited Coverage: Only 10% of student-athlete population is officially reviewed by SLPs	Full Coverage: 100% of student-athletes will be assessed twice per year to ensure services match their current learning profile
Misaligned Scoring: SLP scoring system rarely matches up to recommended support services	Aligned Assessment and Support: New system uses risk factors to better assess students' academic level and align recommended support services



NEXT STEPS

- Pilot system (Summer 2026)
- Full implementation (Fall 2026)
- Train staff on new process



REFLECTIONS

Process Improvement

- Field lends itself to finding answer and fix quickly
- Importance of discovery phase
- Appreciation for methodical approach to problem solving

Improvement Leaders

- True appreciation of the services and time offered



THANK YOU!

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