# 1—Not Using the Degree Audit
Following all of the requirements to graduate can be daunting for our students and advisors! Which math is required, what INST classes does my advisee still need, which courses count towards INST requirements, how many hours do they have? It’s a lot, but the secret to great advising is using tools that do the hard work for you! The Degree Evaluation aka “Degree Audit” tool in Self-Service Banner runs a custom report of where a student is in their degree progress. It provides the total number of hours, GPA, and a detailed list of courses taken and courses remaining (including finding approved subs).

# 2—Short-Term Planning
It is important to consider both short-term and long-term academic planning with students. Sequence courses or pre-requisite courses can often catch students off guard and in a bind. For example, they may only have three classes remaining, but if each class is a pre-req to the next—those three classes will be spread out over three terms.

The other typical issue is thinking about general education requirements over time. Students should not wait to take math or modern language requirements. The longer they wait from high school, the harder the classes will be for the students. Great advisors work with students to plan their courses over the course of their college journey.

# 3—Unresponsive Students
Again, students are often cited as the reason for not using their advisors. And while this is very true in many cases, it is important to help your advisees understand your role and how you can help them. New students are most used to high school guidance counselors and may not understand the power of a great advisor-advisee relationship. Reach out to students and let them know you care and how you can be helpful. Simple and easy gestures go a long way—offer to meet in the library, send a reminder note about add/drop dates, or just check in on difficult a class they are taking.

# 4—Missing a Degree Requirement (right at graduation time!)
It is important to always keep in mind that there are really four main things a student needs to do to graduate: total number of hours, general education requirements, major requirements, and minimum GPA. New advisors often miss the total number of hours or GPA requirement. Great advisors check their student progress, at least once a year.

# 5—Advisees taking duplicate classes
There is a fine line of responsibility between advisor and student when it comes to scheduling. Yes, we want our students to take responsibility when it comes to meeting their requirements. However, advisors often miss important information to help avoid duplicate classes. Make sure to check for transfer credits or approved substitutions when students are registering or planning their schedules. Great advisors run a quick degree audit right before the start of the term to make sure their students are on track!