

Date: October 23, 2014  
To: Academic Senate Committees  
From: Divisional Chair Andre' Knoesen  
Subject: Academic Senate Review: Advising Implementation Plan

As discussed during the September 18<sup>th</sup> Academic Senate Chair Orientation, academic advising remains one of our priorities this year. In particular, we need to define the faculty's role in academic advising. Towards this objective the following has occurred:

- A Blue Ribbon Committee on Enhancing the Undergraduate Student Experience (BRC) was established in 2012 by Chancellor Linda P.B. Katehi and Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Adela de la Torre.
- The Davis Division began examination of the faculty's role advising when in fall 2013 we launched the Representative Assembly Departmental Representative survey on the Faculty's Role in Academic Advising.
- In January 2014, the Davis Division response to the BRC Report included a summary of the Representative Assembly Departmental Representative survey: <http://academic senate.ucdavis.edu/rfc/view.cfm?or&id=188>
- In February 2014, the Committee on Committee's nominated Academic Senate representatives to serve on four BRC subcommittees focused on different implementation categories: 1) Advising, 2) First-Year Experience, 3) Academic/Career Experiences, 4) Student Life/Co-Curricular Experiences. The Advising and First-Year Experience Subcommittees have been working through spring and summer. The Academic/Career Experiences and Student Life/Co-Curricular Experiences Subcommittees will begin meeting soon.

The Advising Implementation Plan from the BRC Advising Subcommittee has been received and is now sent out for comment (see attached). Professor Sean Burgess, and Charles Gasser represented the Academic Senate on this Subcommittee. On behalf of the Davis Division, I thank our colleagues for the time and energy they devoted to this project.

The Subcommittee proposes implementation strategies in response to five BRC report undergraduate advising recommendations (see pages 9-17 of the BRC report). In addition to general comment, as your committee reviews the plan, I would also like you to consider the following questions focusing on the specific role faculty play in advising:

1. Does the Advising Implementation Plan frame the faculty's role in academic advising? If not, what is missing?

2. In some cases, those responsible for implementation are identified. Are the responsible parties correctly identified?
3. Were the highest priority objectives identified when it comes to faculty involvement in advising, and have the appropriate strategies been identified? If not, please elaborate on what is needed.
4. The colleges/divisions are already implementing changes in undergraduate advising. Are you satisfied with the level of engagement between college/division administration and the faculty in moving these plans forward?

Since we are particularly interested in hearing the college perspective, I hope the Faculty Executive Committees will consult broadly with the faculty stakeholders they represent. Further, I would encourage reaching out to faculty who coordinate undergraduate advising in majors.

Attachment

**Blue Ribbon Committee for Enhancing the Undergraduate Student Experience**

**Advising Implementation Plan**

**October 20, 2014**

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Advising Implementation Committee

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## Executive Summary

The proposed Advising Implementation Plan responds to the following five recommendations in the Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee for Enhancing the Undergraduate Student Experience<sup>1</sup>:

1. Assess advising functions to develop a more cohesive delivery model
2. Organize service delivery to address the unique needs of a diverse community
3. Support faculty advisors to maximize the quality of advising
4. Use the online student portal to support services and academic planning with technology-based information
5. Facilitate earlier and more intentional curricular and co-curricular planning

The BRC Advising Implementation Committee was led by faculty nominated by the Committee on Committees to represent the Academic Senate. Student and staff representatives were selected through nomination by college and Student Affairs leadership. The committee composite was designed to deliver a range of perspectives key to strengthening the academic advising program, in preparation for growth of the student population as outlined in the 2020 Initiative<sup>2</sup>.

The Advising Implementation Committee met three times between May and July, 2014. The committee distilled the five recommendations into the auspices of three sub-committees, with each assigned to discuss these recommendations within one of the following themes: (1) training and on-line delivery of advising services; (2) addressing the diverse needs of students; and (3) increasing the involvement of faculty advisors. Each sub-committee met individually for a block of time during each of the three meetings; the remainder of each meeting consisted of summary reports of findings in each of the three areas for full committee feedback. The goal of this process was to examine thoroughly the current status of advising services in their ability to meet the overall objective of improving the undergraduate pathway toward a timely graduation.

The following plan summarizes findings of the Advising Implementation Committee presented as a blueprint for academic and administrative units to use as a guide for meeting the five recommendations outlined above. Full committee discussion led the plan to be offered under the following three chapters:

1. Delivery of Advising Services
2. Campus-wide Improvements
3. College-Specific Improvements

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<sup>1</sup> Blue Ribbon Committee for Enhancing the Undergraduate Student Experience.  
<http://studentaffairs.ucdavis.edu/initiatives/BRC-REPORT-070213-final.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 Initiative: A Path to Academic Excellence and Economic Opportunity.  
[http://chancellor.ucdavis.edu/initiatives/2020\\_Initiative/index.html](http://chancellor.ucdavis.edu/initiatives/2020_Initiative/index.html)

## Chapter 1: Delivery of Advising Services

*Objective 1: Improve existing and establish new training protocols for staff and faculty involved in academic advising.*

### Background

The recommendation of the BRC Committee in its 2013 report was to reconstitute this important mechanism for keeping advising staff and faculty advisors apprised of evidence-based best practices, a goal vital to the changing needs of undergraduates as academic protocols shift and new college- and disciplinary-specific graduation requirements develop. Training mechanisms should be geared toward both staff and faculty. For academic advisors, the annual staff development retreat should be reinstated. For faculty, this training could occur during workshops geared toward new faculty.

### Strategies to meet Objective 1

1. Reconstitute annual advising conference as part of a broad training approach to share best practices on a continual basis.
  - a. Target Audience: Academic Advisors, with separate tract for peer advisors
  - b. Responsible Party: Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (Brett McFarlane) with committee of academic advisors.
  - c. Timeline: Winter/ Early Spring, 2015
  - d. Priority Training Modules:
    - i. Addressing the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, e.g., cultural diversity, distressed students, undocumented students, disengaged students, undeclared majors, students with families. *This list is a sample and will be expanded as the retreat is planned.*
    - ii. Successfully applying technological tools to supplement in-person advising services.
2. Provide faculty development trainings that focus on new models for faculty engagement.
  - a. Target Audience: New faculty
  - b. Responsible Party: Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (Brett McFarlane) with committee of faculty advisors.
  - c. Timeline: Winter/Spring 2015
  - d. Sample Training Modules:
    - i. Addressing the needs of students from diverse backgrounds – see staff training examples.
    - ii. Effectively using technology-based tools and teaching advisees the use of these resources that are available on-line through OASIS, the Student Portal.

- iii. Non-academic advising resources available to students encountering social difficulties and physical /mental health challenges that impact academic performance.
- iv. Responsibilities of the mandatory reporter: the law; campus protocol for disclosure of reportable information; how to respond to a disclosure of an event that has happened or intention to harm self or others.

### Rationale

Previous to state budgetary reductions, UC Davis held an annual staff development retreat for academic advisors. The focus of the reconstituted annual advising retreat will change yearly as new developments arise, e.g., the campus population expands to include more international students and students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, technology plays an important role in supporting academic advising. It is therefore vital that academic advisors receive ongoing training as new on-line protocols and tools become available. In this way, technology can be fully exploited to maximize contact with students and facilitate the delivery of up-to-date, accurate information that will ease their pathway to graduation.

There is currently no formal training mechanism for new faculty to assume advising roles. Faculty advisors are in need of greater access to and training in technology-based advising tools, including understanding how to access and navigate the on-line tools available to students through the student portal. While the opportunity to view on-line resources as the students view them exists, many faculty advisors do not know how to access the appropriate web pages and feel at a disadvantage when advising students.

Faculty also request training in how to handle non-academic concerns raised by advisees (e.g., social difficulties and physical/mental health challenges), as well as access to resources for students in need of non-academic services. Lack of knowledge in these areas leads many faculty to choose not to participate as academic advisors in units where an advising caseload is not mandated. An orientation training for new faculty would likely increase the number of faculty willing to accept an advising caseload in those units and would increase the capacity of all faculty advisors to meet student advising needs effectively and efficiently.

*Objective 2: Develop on-line tools to support advising services for faculty and staff academic advisors.*

### Background

The appropriate use of technology enhances advising capability through an economically feasible and sustainable model. The development of quality on-line FAQs and other tools for the student portal will eliminate the need for students to meet with an advisor over routine questions for which answers can be easily found on-line.



Advising staff will be more available to students in need of triage support that requires personal contact and follow-up.

The Registrar's office is creating on-line hubs in partnership with the Director of Advising's Office to enhance academic planning and degree-progress tracking. These hubs include MyUCDavis for students and OASIS. Currently all academic advising staff and most faculty advisors have access to OASIS.

Strategies to meet Objective 2:

1. Develop protocols for entering and gaining access to data in online portal. Expand basic information provided through FERPA training so faculty and staff advisors understand and know how to apply the law in their work.
  - a. Target Audience: Advising faculty and staff
  - b. Responsible Party: Director of Advising, Office of the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Registrar's Office.
  - c. Timeline: Completed Summer, 2014.
  
2. Establish on-line advising appointment system.
  - a. Target Audience: Faculty and staff academic advisors
  - b. Responsible Party: Student Affairs Office of Technology
  - c. Timeline: Completed Summer, 2014, adopted by most schools and colleges (College of Engineering delayed).
  
3. Extend advising hours through various Internet-based means, e.g.:
  - Expand FAQ knowledge base (see *training* under Objective 1)
  - Expand OASIS and MyUCDavis cross-communication links to accommodate goal for greater efficiency in locating information.
  - Establish on-line group advising session, when appropriate, that would track attendees / chat stream but maintain anonymity among group members. Feasibility for this action item must be further explored.
  - a. Target Audience: Advising / Deans Office staff
  - b. Responsible Party: SAOT/Office of Academic Advising/College Advising Directors
  - c. Timeline: Spring, 2015

Rationale:

Increasing the use of the Internet to improve student access to advising resources is a relatively low-cost, economically sustainable model. At the same time, understanding which student information is confidential and cannot be shared without written consent plays a vital role in entering student data into the system and determining access to that on-line information. On-line FERPA training, which all faculty and advising staff must complete, is inadequate in generating the necessary understanding to work effectively

within its constraints. The registrar has responded to this issue already with a new 40-minute FERPA training module. Additional steps must be taken while increasing on-line resources to ensure student confidentiality with regard to privileged educational and health information.

## **Chapter 2: Campus-Wide Improvements**

*Objective 1: Streamline classification system for advising positions for both staff and faculty.*

### Background

While this objective was identified by the committee as important, time constraints and the lack of centralized oversight for academic advising positions prohibited the Advising Implementation Committee to take the discussion beyond the identification of the desired outcome. The responsible parties are spread throughout the campus. Additional coordination / discussion is required to move this objective forward.

### Strategies to meet Objective 1:

1. Coordinate reclassification process via Career Tracks to ensure stakeholders have input into establishment of new positions.
  - a. Target Audience: Human Resources.
  - b. Responsible Party: Human Resources with input from the Office of Academic Advising
  - c. Timeline: Fall - Spring 2014-15
  
2. Create a new term for “master advisor” that differentiates the lead departmental faculty advisor for undergraduate majors from that of being an advisor of a master’s student.
  - a. Target Audience: Senate faculty
  - b. Responsible Party: Council of Associate Deans
  - c. Timeline: Winter /Spring 2015

### Rationale:

Implicit in this discussion is that oversight of academic advising positions is a shared responsibility among Senate faculty, department chairs, deans, and administrative leadership. Currently advising positions fall into a variety of classifications across the schools, colleges, and Student Affairs. The recommendation of the BRC was to streamline this process so all academic advising positions are classified through the establishment of skills, knowledge, abilities and responsibilities common to the advising function. Reclassification of professional advising staff positions will be addressed by the Career Tracks transformation of staff classifications, beginning with a new classification for academic advisors.

While there was not time to discuss the hiring of professional staff who serve under the staff classification “academic advisors,” the Chair suggests for consideration by the senate faculty that new staff in these appointments will be hired based on the recommendation of a committee that includes a member of each stakeholder, including peer academic advisors, faculty advisors and Chairs and Vice-chairs, where appropriate. An examination of best practices in hiring academic advisors is recommended.

For faculty serving as advisors to undergraduates in a specific major, creating a new term to replace the current title “master advisor” will differentiate that role from that of being the advisor of a master’s student. The term causes confusion among new faculty in particular. A suggested term was “Chair of the Undergraduate Program in X”. This also enables there to be additional faculty major advisors for large majors. It was the recommendation of the BRC to use the CAES web site describing the role of faculty Master Advisors as a starting point for discussion.

(<http://www.caes.ucdavis.edu/admin/resources/fma> )

For such a change to occur, the faculty members involved must have some kind of relief from their regular course load or monetary compensation so this additional burden of time could be formalized.

*Objective 2: Address faculty incentives for greater engagement in student advising so advising is valued.*

### Background

Time constraints prevented the committee from fully analyzing potential strategies for incentivizing faculty to become engaged as undergraduate advisors. Additionally, the most promising strategies would fall under the auspices of the Academic Senate to implement. Therefore, the following strategies are suggested for exploration and implementation by a committee of the Academic Senate.

### Strategies to meet Objective 2:

1. Elevate undergraduate advising out of “service” designation in merits and promotions package to an obligation inherent in the tenure agreement.
  - a. Target Audience: Senate Faculty
  - b. Responsible Party: Academic Senate
  - c. Timeline: Winter/Spring 2015
2. Provide incentives to increase faculty engagement in student mentorship:
  - 1) Involvement as first respondent to early warning (colleges)
  - 2) Faculty residence in student housing (Learning Communities)

- 3) Expand use of Dean Witter funds to host events promoting faculty-student engagement (Student Affairs)
- 4) First year student-faculty mentorship project (See FY Implementation Plan)
  - a. Target Audience: Senate faculty
  - b. Responsible Party: (in parentheses for each item)
  - c. Timeline: Varied/ TBD by Senate Committee

### Rationale

Most faculty on the original BRC committee as well as on the implementation committees (Advising and First Year Experience) believe undergraduate advising is key to their role as faculty members. The current weight of undergraduate advising in the merits and promotions system does not mirror the importance faculty feel this role carries. Merit and promotion packets include a section to list the number of thesis committee memberships for PhD and MS students, as well as a space to list the students' current positions (if known). Currently, there is no equivalent section for listing the names and current position of each undergraduate whose research is supervised by a faculty member. Undergraduate advising is a crucial mission of a research university where all faculty should participate.

Items 1), 3), and 4) under Strategy 2 in this objective are more fully examined by the First Year Implementation Committee, with recommended strategies included in that plan. Item 2), faculty residence in student housing, is part of the Learning Communities initiative that is already underway.

### **Chapter 3: College-Level Recommendations**

*Objective 1: Develop tools and protocols that allow for earlier intervention for students in negative academic standing or without a declared major*

#### Background

The issue of timing around Academic Probation / Subject to Dismissal (AP/SD) notification – how late in the quarter this occurs –, coupled with the lag time between notification and when a student chooses to take action – often when it is too late to make changes that remove that status – are of continuing concern to faculty and advising staff. Earlier intervention was also recommended for students without a declared major or locked out of an impacted major. This problem is especially acute for students changing to a different college.

#### Strategies to meet Objective 1

1. Provide a notification system through the student portal so students in negative academic standing are automatically notified via an electronic message.

- a. Target Audience: Undergraduate Advisors
  - b. Responsible Party: Registrar's Office
  - c. Timeline: Immediate (Done)
2. Prevent students from being locked out of an impacted major/reducing the number of impacted majors.
- a. Target Audience: Department Chairs/Vice Chairs
  - b. Responsible Party: Faculty, Senate, Provost, VC for Student Affairs
  - c. Timeline: Fall, 2015

### Rationale

Discussion entailed the various aspects of the AP/SD process and points at which improvements could be made with supportive on-line and personnel resources. This topic also intersects with discussion of the First Year Implementation Committee, given that the AP/SD status most frequently occurs in the first year.

A more systematic approach to facilitating the changing of majors that requires a change of college affiliation is warranted, but falls outside the auspices of this committee's charge. Changing majors / colleges curtails the availability of some information from advising sessions to reach the advising staff receiving the student in the new college. The committee recommends that a method of facilitating communication across these channels take place through the development of the advising portal. *Note:* Since the committee met, the change of major form has been made available online, allowing Colleges to introduce transitional requirements/materials into the process and even requiring certain steps before an "approval" is granted.

Reducing the number of impacted majors is crucial for effective advising across campus. Ideally, the faculty and advising staff should expect and encourage first year students to explore new fields of study, particularly those disciplines not generally taught in high school. For this to happen, the option to switch majors or colleges should remain open to these students following matriculation. The problem is particularly acute in L&S, where the Psychology major is currently impacted, thus preventing qualified students from joining the major. The Advising Implementation Committee recommends that the Provost enable departments to keep their majors open by increasing FTEs, providing funds for lecturers and/or building larger lecture halls, and expanding laboratory space. This problem will become particularly acute as the 2020 plan is gradually put into place. Therefore, clear avenues of communication between the faculty, the Senate, the Provost, and the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs must be put in place.

## **Conclusion**

### **Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation Strategies**

The Advising Implementation Plan provides a work plan to be undertaken by the leadership of specific units and divisions, with recommended time lines. Metrics for measuring degree of success in meeting objectives will include both quantitative and qualitative data collection relating to student learning outcomes. Quantitative data such as counts and frequencies will determine the degree to which program enhancements have been successful by virtue of how these programs are accessed and used. Qualitative data collection via surveys and/or focus groups can elucidate the reasons why a specific strategy is or is not effective and reveal opportunities for program refinement. When tied to student learning outcomes, qualitative analysis will help us to understand where a specific plan needs refinement to help students meet their educational objectives. Qualitative assessment will guide the evaluation team's formative process so we can continually monitor and refine implementation strategies.

### **Evaluation Process**

In its June, 2014 report, the BRC recommended engaging an external (to Student Affairs) evaluator to manage the formative and summative evaluation processes in collaboration with the offices of Academic Assessment and Institutional Analysis. This approach ensures objectivity and institutional transparency while maximizing available resources and the volumes of data already collected and analyzed under the auspices of Institutional Analysis. The School of Education's Center for Education and Evaluation Services is a logical candidate for conducting the evaluation, given the degree to which the Center already collaborates with units throughout campus and its expertise in conducting complex educational assessments tied to learning outcomes. Funding resources will be required to staff the evaluation activity. The responsible parties identified under each plan item will be responsible for coordinating evaluation strategies with the chosen external evaluator, and in cooperation with the Academic Senate, the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, and the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. It is recommended that the evaluator report to an evaluation oversight committee representing each of these units.