CWU | Central Washington University

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Academic Advising Work Group
Preliminary Report

On March 15, 2017, the ten members of the Academic Advising Work Group were emailed an official letter from the Baccalaureate Task Force Executive Team to examine academic advising at CWU. The six charges (A 01- A 06) were reviewed at an initial charge meeting on March 29 with regular weekly meetings held throughout the month of April.

With an initial discussion regarding the role of advising being "to assist students as they define, plan, and achieve their educational goals" (CAS Standards, 9th Edition, p. 39), the advising work group took the necessary steps to respond to the six charges. Our responses to the first four charges are listed below and accompanied by more detailed Appendices (A-C):

Charge A 01: Work with Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Baccalaureate Task Force Executive Team to Refine Target Parameters.

Response. Work Group members met with the Baccalaureate Task Force on March 29 to discuss expectations and overall charge for the committee. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee will be briefed on the preliminary report findings and asked for recommendations to further shape the final report.

Charge A 02: Summarize the Current Advising Models and Practices at CWU.

Response. The student experience of advising is highly dependent on the program of study and when they join CWU. While there is no one model, advising at CWU generally breaks down into five areas:
- Faculty Advisors (see Appendix A for workload units breakdown);
- Special Program Advisors (e.g., TRIO SSS);
- College/Departmental Employed Advisors (i.e., staff);
- Professional Advisors (advisors reporting to the area of Professional Advising); and
- Exploratory/First Year Advisors.

The Office of the Dean of Student Success under the auspices of an Associate Dean provides the primary oversight and leadership for Professional, First Year/Exploratory, and several grant funded academic advising positions. First Year and Exploratory advising has one director with eight advisors; Professional advising has one director with 14 advisors; and the grant funded programs (e.g., TRIO SSS) employ several advisors. A more detailed review of these areas and duties allocated to specific advising roles was synthesized into a three-page document (see Appendix B).

Charge A 03: Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges, and Opportunities of Advising at CWU.

Response. Prior to beginning the SWOT analysis (See Appendix C), an examination of a variety of documents and data occurred by the group members independently and during meetings. The group gave special attention to specific issues identified in the original charge:
- Criteria for defining the quality of advising was informed through an examination of CAS standards (CAS Academic Advising Programs, 9th Edition, 2015) and NACADA core competencies for advisors.
- The Director of Professional Advising contributed an outline of the roles and responsibilities for professional academic advisors and faculty advisors with examples given from eight departments.

- A subcommittee examined equity of opportunity for students. Ms. Darting contacted Dr. Kandee Cleary to request additional survey data to contribute to analysis. Data is forthcoming.
- Policies and procedures were also collected by several group members and reviewed.
- Students' perspectives on the efficacy of advising at CWU was reviewed through a series of reports (e.g., NSSE and Mapworks) and through two meetings with the Student Academic Senate (SAS) and two meetings with ASCWU leadership (one with President Armando Ortiz and one with Vice President Ryan Zimmerman) conducted by Dr. Brown.
  - 2015-2016 Mapworks highlights from First Year Cohort:
    - 83.0% (n=263) of students surveyed knew their advisor
    - However, only 7.9% (n=25) felt strongly connected and 30.2% (n=95) felt connected to their advisor
  - 2016 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) highlights:
    - *"Quality of Interaction with Advisors"* for first year students was significantly higher than national peers (p<.01 for 8 Peer group; p<.001 for Far West Public)
    - However, senior ratings showed no statistically significant difference from national averages

Charge A 04: Provide a List of Recommendations for Improving Advising at CWU.

Primary Recommendation

Conduct CAS Self-Assessment: The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) offers a powerful tool (i.e., Self-Assessment Guide) CWU can use to ensure a sound framework for developing robust advising practices. According to CAS, an exemplary advising model will be "intentionally designed", built upon theory and research, woven into the fabric of the institution, "responsive" to unique needs of students offered through a variety of modalities, and "reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population" (p.39). The CWU hybrid model of advising should be examined through the lens of these powerful standards.

Thus, the group recommends a full CAS review of academic advising to occur during the 2017-2018 academic year. A report of key findings and recommendations based on the self-assessment should be presented to the Provost upon completion of the review.

Further, the CAS Self-Assessment Review Team should include key stakeholders across campus and consider the following membership:

-Faculty Senate and a Faculty at-Large   -Advising director

-Staff/departmental advisor   -Associate Dean for Student Development and

-Exploratory advisor   Achievement

-Professional advisor   -Member from Academic Advising Work Group

-Student (via SAS)

-Grant and Special Program advisor

Secondary Recommendations

Additionally, the group offers the following recommendations based on an analysis of the information reviewed while addressing the first three charges:

1) *Improve transfer student academic advising support through the creation of a transfer center*
   - ❑ System does not adequately support transfer students who make up roughly 50% of student body.
2) *Fund advisors at 12 months instead of 11 months*
   - ❑ Center advising and new student orientations are negatively impacted.
3) *Address faculty issues related to academic advising by assuring clear policies and faculty input and voice*
   - ❑ A review of the 2013-2014 COACHE survey provides some evidence that segments of faculty are dissatisfied regarding their recognition for advising (n=67, 41%) and unclear about expectations regarding advising and tenure (n= 25, 53%); both concerns were more frequent than at other institutions. If advising is a strategic priority for CWU, it needs to be clearer in academic policies and procedures including the CBA. Language needs to be consistent and practices handled with clear guidelines and expectations. Currently, the CBA is vague when operationally defining the faculty workload for academic advising, and results from a recent internal review provided by Dr. Wilson and ADCO leadership (see Appendix A) provides further evidence of inconsistent practices. This causes issues of parity and equity across departments.
4) *Create mission, vision, and values for advising at CWU*
   - ❑ Connect to the overall university mission and strategic goals.
5) *Improve training, development, communication, and connectedness*
   - ❑ Offer ongoing training tied to NACADA core training competencies.
   - ❑ Provide a venue for educating advisors on critical updates, disseminating information, and clarifying questions.
   - ❑ Address inconsistent professional development for faculty advising skills.
6) *Create a task force to examine the advisor assignment process and academic advising holds*
   - ❑ Students have reported confusion regarding who their advisor is, when they should see them, and for what purpose.
     - ❖ Questions to consider:
       Is it necessary to have special programs as an additional primary advisor? When switching majors, why is it necessary for the current major department to approve a student dropping the major? How will this current system be affected by RCM? Should we switch from using holds as a "punishment to see an advisor" to a system that rewards students for seeing their advisor at appropriate times?
7) *Roles and responsibilities for both the student and academic advisor is an area that needs further refinement*
   - ❑ Creation of an academic advising syllabus, reviewed and discussed at orientation, would set the tone for the purpose of advising and expectations. This is a NACADA recommended practice.
   - ❑ Training students on their responsibility would reduce student stress and bottlenecks in advising work flow.
8) *Create an academic advising component in new University Strategic Plan*
9) *Increase online advising presence and add advising support for Pierce Campus*

Appendix A

Summary of Information about Additional Faculty Workload Units (WLUs) for Advising at CWU
The following question was asked:
The Baccalaureate Advising Committee would like to know since the academic year starting in fall 2012 and continuing to the present:

1. Has any faculty member in the department received assigned workload units for advising?

2. If the answer to the first question is yes, how many faculty members in their department get workload units, how many workload units are they getting, and are faculty members being additionally compensated for these workload units?

From a request for information by ADCO Chair Wendy Cook to department chairs
Fifteen chairs responded. Two departments (Physical Education, School Health, and Movement Studies and Philosophy and Religious Studies) responded in the negative. Of the 13 department chairs that did give WLUs to faculty for advising, they ranged from 1-6 WLUs although the high end included program directors who were also doing other duties in those 6 WLUs. The vast majority were in the range of 2-4 WLUs to several faculty in a department. Both NTT and TT faculty got WLUs for this advising. No chair reported that TT WLUs were additional compensation. Instead this was counted as service or teaching WLUs. Three chairs in CAH and COTS said that while faculty getting additional WLUs was their department's past and current practice, they were told to discontinue this after this year by their deans. They will be dividing advisees up and allocating them to all TT faculty in their departments.

From a request to Charlene Andrews about information in Faculty 180
In the past 5 years, 44 faculty have reported getting WLUs specifically for advising. Most reported receiving 2 WLUs for this.

Appendix B

Summary of Advising Areas at Central Washington University, 2016-2017

Academic Advising in the Colleges
- Faculty advising by academic department or by college
- Staff advisors within academic departments or by college
    - College of Business
    - School of Education
    - Computer Science
    - ITAM (Information Technology & Administrative Management)
    - Music
    - STEM Education
    - Physics

Academic Advising Offices
- First Year & Exploratory Advising
    - Entering First Year students
    - Exploratory "undecided" and "undeclared" students
    - Wildcat Transition Program
    - STAR (Student Transitions and Academic Resources)
- Professional Advising
    - Entering Transfer students
    - Centers advising
    - Online advising
    - Major Level Professional advising

Academic Advising provided within Special Programs
- TRiO/SSS (Student Support Services)
- CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program)
- Student Athletes
- International Students
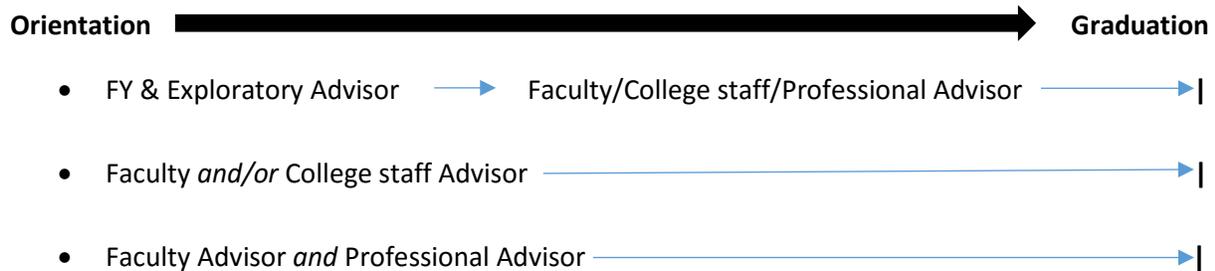- Douglas Honors College
- Running Start

Other Advising-related offices:

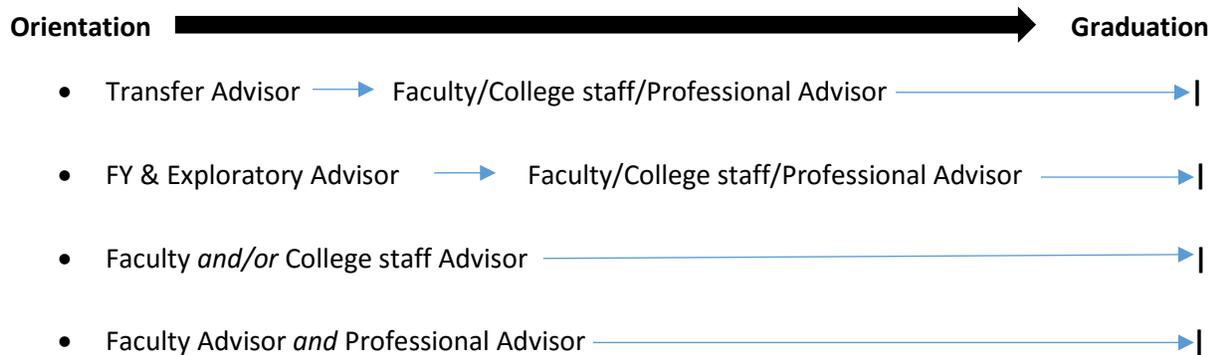|	
Admissions	Disability Services
McNair Program	Study Abroad
Veterans	

Academic Advising Pathways at CWU

Some academic advising occurs before students apply to the university. For purposes of this summary, we will be looking at the advising that occurs once a student has applied and been admitted to the university. Once students are admitted, they are invited and asked to attend an Orientation. Students are assigned to advisors from Orientation to Graduation, typically by the following pathways. Students passed to another advisor is noted by the arrow.

First Year Students

Orientation ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━▶ **Graduation**

- FY & Exploratory Advisor ──▶ Faculty/College staff/Professional Advisor ──▶|

- Faculty *and/or* College staff Advisor ─────────────────────▶|

- Faculty Advisor *and* Professional Advisor ──────────────▶|

Transfer Students

Orientation ━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━▶ **Graduation**

- Transfer Advisor ──▶ Faculty/College staff/Professional Advisor ─────▶|

- FY & Exploratory Advisor ──▶ Faculty/College staff/Professional Advisor ──▶|

- Faculty *and/or* College staff Advisor ─────────────────────▶|

- Faculty Advisor *and* Professional Advisor ──────────────▶|

First Year Students (Ellensburg campus)

The majority of first year students entering CWU are advised by academic advisors in the First Year and Exploratory Advising office. The FY/Exploratory advisors often refer students to academic departments, college staff advisors, professional advisors, and/or faculty during the exploration process to further discuss programs. When a student is admitted into an academic major program, the advisor assignment is automatically dropped from a First Year and Exploratory advisor's caseload.

Some first year students are in special programs and are assigned to an advisor from that area for the entire duration the student is a part of the program. These students will not be assigned to an advisor in the First Year and Exploratory Advising office. Examples of these programs are:

- TRiO SSS (Student Support Services)
- CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program)
- Wildcat Transition Program
- STAR (Student Transitions and Academic Resources)
- Student Athletes
- International Students
- Douglas Honors College

For First Year students who have been admitted into an academic major program at entry to CWU, they are also assigned to one of the following; an academic advisor in the Professional Advising office (for certain designated majors), a college staff advisor, or a faculty advisor.

Transfer Students (Ellensburg campus)
Ideally students enter at orientation or via working with the transfer advisor/departmental/professional advisors (This is an area that needs to be further addressed). Some transfer students may also begin by working directly with exploratory advising. Once these students declare or indicate a strong area of preference, they are assigned to an advisor in accordance with that areas assignment process.

Transfer Students (Des Moines, Lynnwood, Pierce Centers)
These locations have professional center advisors who provide general advising support with an emphasis on basic entry, general education, and policy advising. They provide additional advising for College of Business (the largest programs at Lynnwood/Des Moines), with roles that are equivalent to professional advisors in Ellensburg. The remaining programs at these centers are advised directly by faculty members or departmental personal. Administrative support is provided by center staff.

Transfer Students (Eastside Centers)
General Services are provided as needed by the Director of Professional Advising and the Transfer Advising area.

Online Degree Students
Students begin with a designated online Professional advisor. These advisors contact new students prior to classes beginning. All online degree students are declared in specific programs and assigned to a faculty advisor for that area and an advisor in online advising that serves as their general advising support.

Faculty and Professional Advising
Faculty advising is program specific. Faculty focus on guiding students academically and mentoring their future careers. It can occur in a formalized faculty advisor-student advisee relationship, less formally via teaching and conversations related to specific class, mentoring for research, advising for internships, and other forms. Most professional advising positions work in a dual manner with faculty advising counterparts lifting some of the advising burden from faculty to allow for the faculty to focus more on mentoring the students and to provide more consistency in advising across the student experience.

Appendix C

SWOT—Central Washington University (Version #2)

Strengths (Things to consider: Distinct qualities, especially relative to peer institutions, NACADA, data; Significant assets, resources, processes; Notable accomplishments).

- delivery of advising using multiple formats (e.g., online, in-person, skype, group, phone, email)
- organizational charts demonstrating clear channels of authority for the various areas
- directors with long institutional knowledge and strong network
- advisors who have been nationally and regionally recognized for their work by NACADA
- NSSE and Mapworks provides some baseline data for students' experience with advising and is encouraging
    - NSSE (2016)
        - "Quality of interaction with advisor" for first year students was rated significantly higher for CWU advisors when compared to 8 Peers and Far West Public
    - Mapworks (2015-2016)
        - 83% (n=263) of first year students knew their academic advisor
        - 85% (n=127) of second year students knew their academic advisor
- collaborative, supportive, and willing to promote various campus resources for the benefit of student development and achievement
- federally funded programs have goals for diversity and access
- commitment to students
- strong partnership with FYE/SYE
- relatively small class sizes means stronger faculty relationships with students

Weaknesses: (Things to Consider: Gaps in capabilities; Detriments to reputation, lack of incentives; Barriers to presence, reach, quality; Key problems with delivery, access, process, policies, organization, leadership).

- mission and vision for academic advising at CWU is missing
- not consistently guided by a set of written goals and objectives that are directly related to one stated overarching mission and vision for academic advising at CWU
- advising model is not strategically structured or guided by CAS standards
- training and development is inconsistent across advising; has not been thoughtfully tied to NACADA's core pillars of competency
- responsibilities and performance expectations are not consistent and clear across advising
- assessment is lacking and/or using outdated methods of collection
- staff and professional advisors have limited career advancement opportunities; current leadership structure of advising is too flat – little room for growth
- facilities – first-year and Exploratory, TRIO, and CAMP advising is located in Hertz Hall; would benefit from being in Bouillon Hall where one-stop shop for student support is being built
- facilities – professional advising does not have an office for all college advisors; some are located in Bouillon Hall
- lack of cohesion and inclusion across advising
- various reporting lines
- high advising caseloads in some areas
- Increasing numbers of double majors requires more coordination across departments/colleges (disincentive to do this)
- Faculty workload management in areas of high growth
- Variable faculty skills/interest in advising means student advising may suffer, or there may be inequity in faculty workload
- Faculty receive mixed messages about their role in this area
- We lack a shared understanding of the role of advising; what are we communicating?
- Some students report too many advisors
- CBA language is too vague regarding phrase "beyond the normal teaching load" (Appendix A, Sec. 1.1.5.a); not seen in the same way across campus; variety of ways this language is interpreted across campus
- Assignment of advisors when students switch majors; who drops students from their major?

- advising holds; 75 credit hold – is this supposed to be a major declaration hold?; faculty advisors may not know what to do with this?; we need reevaluate this
- attrition of advisors
  - most staff and professional advisors are on 11-month contracts; especially problematic for Center advisors who have no back-up; when out of the office for week-long cyclic, students are impacted
  - cost of living is not considered when hiring advisors who live and work in King County
  - budget cuts for federal programs that have academic advisors (e.g., TRIO 10% decrease)
- transfer students need more strategic support
  - late registration: we are losing students because they are not getting into their courses (we are retaining them at similar rate as freshman)
  - decouple course registration and new student orientation
  - incoming transfer students are currently not required to see an advisor or attend orientation; suggestion to make it mandatory to see an academic advisor
    - there will be a burden on the student to have transfer information into the system, etc.

Opportunities: (Things to Consider: Local/Student/Institutional/College/Departmental needs; Technology innovation; Centers; Community and community/university partnerships; Quality and competency improvements).

- consensus throughout institutions of higher education and WA state legislature is that academic advising is a critical tool to help drive student success initiatives and ultimately improve retention and graduation rates; innovative systems focused on collaboration
- while we have NSSE and Mapworks data, this is limited to a certain population of students and does not include an assessment of learning outcomes; advising would benefit from a consistent student feedback survey including learning outcomes; this type of survey is being piloted for the first time Spring quarter by Exploratory, Professional, and Athletic advising
- assessment aligned with CAS standards and NACADA – can be used to improve services
- find office space for professional advisors who are not currently located in a department
- creation of an academic advising syllabus including mission, vision, expectations and responsibilities of student and advisor, and learning outcomes
- transfer students represent 50% of population; transfer center that focuses on articulation systems/agreements, course equivalences (in partnership with Registrar) and marketing of such, and student success efforts
- implementation of technology to improve assessment and proactive advising; both areas would benefit from an innovative approach and infusion of technology; using methods students respond to
- according to NACADA, ACT's Sixth National Survey of Academic Advising focuses on these critical areas for effective advising programs – training, assessment of the program and individual advisors, and recognition (Gordon, Habley, and Grites, 2005); more can be done in this area with minimal financial cost
- build a sustainable culture of advising at CWU by creating and implementing an academic advising training and development program or council focusing on NACADA's three core competencies, and provide ongoing training and communication opportunities for collaboration and connection across advising
- Mapworks data (more analysis of similar data would be useful)
  - 80.6% (n=54) of first year students (2016) were at least moderately stressed about choosing their major, of which, 34.4% responded towards at the extreme end of the scale (1 or 2)
- improved tools are available for monitoring student success and connecting to students that works well with People Soft and Outlook (e.g., EAB's Student Success Collaborative)

- look at allocations of advisors across institutions, give consideration to areas they represent, align with physical space, move advisors closer to departments they serve
- systematic approach to ensuring a student has a primary advisor; especially as they switch majors; receiving college drops major, adds new college, and assigns advisor; training and approach needs to be universally applied
- each advisor would have a unique role; it is ok for them to be listed; a primary would be on the top; modification to People Soft
- reevaluate advising holds; how are they used?; how are they communicated?; are there too many?
  - Advisor competencies; students meet these; only receive a hold if they are not on track
- incentives?
- create an Academic Advising syllabus
  - to include the roles of both the advisor and the student

Threats : (Things to Consider: Political and legislative; Environmental shifts; Competitor (existing and new) intentions, improvements; Resources put at risk that are needed to sustain internal capabilities, strengths; Insurmountable weaknesses; Loss of key leadership, faculty and staff).

- attrition of advisors
  - most staff and professional advisors are on 11-month contracts; especially problematic for Center advisors who have no back-up; when out of the office for week-long cyclic, students are impacted
  - cost of living is not considered when hiring advisors who live and work in King County
  - budget cuts for federal programs that have academic advisors (e.g., TRIO 10% decrease)

- financial resources
  - state budget? How we are funded; when back-filling ends, we would have a big issue with funding and would have to raise tuition
  - RCM model?
  - salary equity issues
- increasing numbers of students needed to support decreased tuition revenues per student means less money per student
- increasing class sizes means less faculty/student interaction
- system that is in place does not support transfer student adequately
- enrollment growth
  - Workload issues; effort
- faculty issues
  - not included in work load plans in many cases
  - inconsistent guidelines
  - inconsistent or non-existent training
  - faculty/student relationship (bond)
  - compensation for high advising levels