Overview

In an effort to promote increased levels of student success (specifically, graduation rates), CWU recently invested $500,000 to reorganize academic advising and hire full-time professional advisors for upper division students. The overarching objective of this initiative is to develop a comprehensive and coordinated academic advising structure to facilitate student success from admission to graduation.

Funding for this plan will cover the hiring of seven new academic advisors, two new administrative support staff, and a small portion of one advising director’s salary. As of September 2, 2014, the reorganization and new hires have been in place. Academic Advising now has three core departments (note: departmental names are currently under review and may be adjusted prior to the start of fall quarter):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th># of Advisors</th>
<th>Main Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising: Exploratory</td>
<td>Carolyn Thurston</td>
<td>5.5 fte</td>
<td>Hertz Hall, 1st Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising: Arts, Humanities, Sciences, Education, &amp;</td>
<td>Jason White</td>
<td>8.0 fte</td>
<td>Bouillon Hall, 2nd Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Advising: Business, University Centers, &amp; Online</td>
<td>Scott Carlton</td>
<td>5.5 fte</td>
<td>Hertz Hall, 2nd Floor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Exploratory office will provide “high-touch” academic advising to first-year and undeclared students. Traditionally, our advisee to advisor ratio for this population has been 500:1. With this reorganization, we anticipate reducing the ratio to near the national average of 300:1. Additionally, the Exploratory office will work closely with Admissions and Organizational Effectiveness to identify students most in need of intensive/holistic advising support.

For students with a declared major, enrolled in online programs, or enrolled at a University Center, professional advisors will partner with faculty advisors in supporting the student path to graduation. These professional advisors do not replace the important role of faculty advising/mentoring but ensure compliance with general education and program requirements, connect students with appropriate faculty mentors, facilitate change in major declarations, and advise students on co-curricular opportunities.

Additional Items of Note

**Unified training:** In order to create a coordinated and consistent advising structure, all professional advisors will participate in quarterly trainings. The trainings will be developed by the academic advising directors.

**Advisee Management Pages:** All professional advisors are required to use the Advisee Management Pages in My CWU to summarize meetings with students; these records can be viewed and updated by all
advisors and will create a consistent advising record for all students. Over the next year, faculty will be invited to learn and use the pages with their own advisees. University-wide use of the Advisee Management Pages will support student transitions from pre-major to major status, as well as changes in major.

**Recruitment support:** Because academic advising is critical throughout a student’s time at CWU, professional advisors will lend support to some university and departmental recruitment efforts. Advisors will partner with New Student Programs, offer support to dual admitted students, engage in campus visitation programs as appropriate, and support departmental communication and web efforts as appropriate.

**FAQs**

**Q. What role will faculty have in academic advising?**
A. Advisors in the colleges do not replace faculty mentoring or discipline specific advising. Each department has its own approach to providing program specific advising. Advisors in the colleges will work with departments individually to determine an appropriate complimentary role for the professional academic advisors.

**Q. How will major declarations be submitted?**
A. Declaration and change of major processes will be coordinated by the professional academic advisors. Because each department may have unique needs related to major declaration, advisors will work closely with each department to make individual adaptations as needed. A consistent major declaration process will not only be clearer for students but will ensure consistent “major” data thereby improving our ability to analyze student success data by major.

**Q. Why will this new plan improve faculty-student interaction?**
A. Students don’t always know what faculty members are most aligned with their academic and professional interests and who to contact directly. Professional advisors will be able to connect students with appropriate faculty and assist students as they seek faculty mentors.

**Q. Why are the advisors supervised by Student Success, not the Colleges?**
A. Maintaining a centralized advising structure provides four clear advantages: 1) Training. Training and advisor accountability can be more consistently managed through a centralized approach; 2) Organizational Flexibility. Staff absences and peak staffing needs can be more readily addressed through cross-trained staff; 3) Professional Growth. Through a larger team of professional advisors, with a seasoned advising director, professional mentoring and development will be enhanced; and, 4) Enhancing Student Success. As data becomes more available, the CWU Student Success Division will work with Advisors and Academic Departments on issues of retention and graduation success.
Q. How will the new advising structure help students?
A. A coordinated and consistent advising structure will improve information accessibility for choosing a major, assist in connecting students with faculty mentors, strengthen CWU’s ability to identify and reach out to students who are struggling academically, improve graduation rates, and lower time to degree.

Q. How will the new advising structure help faculty?
A. Faculty will have the time to discuss meaningful topics in greater depth and spend additional time mentoring students. Rather than having to focus on the fine print of degree requirements and the technicalities of course scheduling, faculty can focus on professional development, internships, graduate school options, and undergraduate scholarship.

Q. How will we know if the new advising model is successful?
A. While qualitative metrics like student and faculty satisfaction will lend important feedback, success will ultimately be measured by higher graduation rates and reduced time to degree. Our aggressive goal is to attain a five-year graduation rate of 60% by 2019 (historical five-year graduation rates have remained below 50%).

Q. Why don’t the upper division advisors have offices in departmental suites?
A. While there are many reasons why it would be advantageous to have the professional advisors physically located in the department(s) to which they are attached, space constraints don’t always render it possible. In some instances, the advisors will be located with their department(s); in cases where this isn’t possible, the advisor will make every effort to build a strong connection with departmental faculty and staff.

Please contact Jesse Nelson, Associate Dean for Student Achievement, with questions about the new Academic Advising model (x1599; nelsonje@cwu.edu).