

Advising-Career-Exploratory Studies

ACES

University of Wyoming

Academic Advising Plan for Undergraduate Students

The Advising, Career & Exploratory Studies office undergraduate advising plan will be available to all interested parties and details the ACES advising structure and responsibilities to the student. The plan is grounded in structures and practices designed to meet the 8 UW Undergraduate Advising Goals:

- Embrace and promote a culture of student readiness and success that overcomes barriers;
- First-year student and first-semester transfer student advising that is consistent, available, and student centered;
- Training and certification for all advisors to ensure consistency and accuracy;
- Clear governance and accountability for advising system;
- Use advising technology and communications that promote student success;
- Promoting engaged academic and career planning;
- Establishment of exploratory studies tracks;
- Assessment and continuous improvement of advising system.

This plan provides the details and roadmap for advising undergraduate students at their entry point through completion including assessment of advising at the department and college/school levels.

A. PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE OF UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ADVISING

ACES advising philosophy includes a variety of methodologies influenced by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Core Values¹ and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) for Academic Advising Programs². Using NACADA Values and CAS Standards as a foundation ACES utilizes approaches such as advising-as-teaching, developmental, proactive, and appreciative advising. All these techniques encourage ACES Academic Advisors to work with students to develop relationships with a foundation of mutual respect, trust, and ethical principles.

ACES advisors seek to understand each student, provide accurate information, promote self-reflection, and foster critical thinking. ACES advisors recognize that each student is unique, taking time to build rapport and mutual trust. Our advisors strive to understand each student's identity, goals, values, and motivation. It is through understanding that ACES advisors can help students develop their own values as well as academic and career goals, along with plans to achieve those goals.

ACES hopes to dispel the concept of advising week. The term advising week indicates that students should only communicate with their advisor one week during the academic term, and that the communication directly relates to the registration process. The purpose of advising in the ACES

¹ NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2005). *NACADA statement of core values of academic advising*. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghour/View-Articles/Core-values-of-academic-advising.aspx>

² Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2015). *Academic advising programs*. Retrieved from <http://standards.cas.edu/getpdf.cfm?PDF=E864D2C4-D655-8F74-2E647CDECD29B7D0>

office is to teach students about the academic process, educate them to policies and procedures in order for students to make informed decisions regarding their education.

B. MEASURABLE GOALS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

The goals and student outcomes of the ACES advising center reflect the goals and outcomes put forth by the Advising Redesign Action Group (ARAG) as part of the Strategic Enrollment Management plan.³ ACES goals and student outcomes are specific for students based on the following characteristics: (1) First-time Full-time students, (2) Continuing students, and (3) Academically reinstated students.

First-time Full-time students

ACES advisors will be intentional about building rapport with first-time full-time students in order to create an advisor/advisee relationship that is grounded in mutual respect and trust. Advisors will be proactive in reaching out to students throughout the year, but specifically three times during the semester: Early Alert, Mid-term, and Registration.

Continuing students

The goal for continuing students working with ACES is to understand the steps necessary to transition into their degree program of choice. Many continuing students are working to gain admission into colleges or departments at UW. Continuing undeclared students are encouraged to work with career counselors to develop concrete academic and career goals, guiding them to an appropriate degree program.

Academically reinstated students

Students that have been placed on academic suspension, are eligible to petition the ACES office for reinstatement after one academic term.⁴ ACES has the goal for these students to regain good academic standing and successfully transition to the department of their choosing. To accomplish this, academically reinstated students will enroll in ACES 1105: Academic Success Skills. This is a highly self-reflective course focusing on self-management and academic success strategies.

Reinstated students will remain undeclared until their grade point average meets the minimum to transition to their academic department.

Specific Student Populations

ACES has additional goals and student outcomes for the following student populations: (1) Exploratory Studies, (2) Pre-nursing, and (3) Bridge students.

Exploratory Studies

Incoming first-time full-time students will be asked to select one of 6 exploratory studies tracks:

- Communication, Media & the Arts
- Math, Data Science & Business

³ Alexander, A. & Chytka, J. (2017). *Re-envisioning academic advising at the University of Wyoming: Report to the undergraduate enrollment governance committee from the advising redesign action group*. Retrieved from: http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/files/docs/re-envisioning_advising.pdf

⁴ UW Regulation 2-109; http://www.uwyo.edu/regs-policies/files/docs/regulations-2018/uw_reg_2-109_approved_7-12-18.pdf

- Government, Public Policy & Justice
- Human Service, Wellness & Social Science
- Science, Technology & the Environment
- Culture, Society & Diversity

ACES has the goal of providing these students with track specific experiential learning opportunities. The students that participate in the exploratory studies experiential learning will be able to make more informed decisions regarding degree program choice, based on experience and self-reflection. The goal is for students that participate in the exploratory studies program to change their major only once, into their program of choice.

Exploratory Studies Students will be given the opportunity to meet with their ACES advisor in the first 3-weeks of their college career to set up an exploratory plan. This process will provide students with intentional experiential learning. The experiential learning plus academic coursework will help assist a student's decision on an academic program.

Pre-nursing, Basic BSN

ACES will provide information sessions for Pre-nursing students in October and March of their first-year. The goal of these info sessions is for Pre-nursing students to fully understand their academic plan and the process to apply to the non-freshman admission to the Basic BSN program.

Students will create an academic plan during one-on-one consultation with their ACES advisor.

ACES advisors are best suited to work with these students because of the need for major and career exploration. Pre-nursing students need to have alternative plans to pursue in the case that they are not accepted to the non-freshman admission to the Basic BSN program.

Bridge students

ACES advising staff will have 5 contact opportunities with Bridge students during the first semester, 3 in-class visits to the student's FYS classroom, and 2 in-person visits. The goal of this is to implement proactive advising for this academically at-risk population, as well provide consistent, available and student-centered advising.

Aligning an ACES academic advisor with the student's FYS allows the advisor to bring advising to the classroom. This also allows for a direct connection between the FYS instructor and the advisor, increasing the network of support for the student.

Survey and Assessment

All ACES students will be prompted to complete a check-in survey before any advising visit, and receive a post advising email survey to gauge advising availability and approachability. The pre- and post-survey will provide a way to gauge student learning with electronic resources (e.g. Ellucian Degreeworks and Banner Registration system).

Quantitative ACES goals (e.g. 2 in-person visits for Bridge Students in the first semester) will be tracked through the Advisortrac database.

C. COLLEGE ADVISING MODEL

Student Populations

The Advising, Career, and Exploratory Studies office works with many different student populations, serving as the primary academic advising office for the following:

- Exploratory Studies
- Pre-nursing
- Bridge Students (Students admitted with support)
- Undeclared Transfer Students
- Undeclared continuing students
 - o Students transitioning between majors but need to achieve college or departmental admission criteria
- Academic reinstatements
- High School Guests
- Non-degree Seeking students
- National Student Exchange (NSE) students

Student hand-offs

ACES serves as a base for incoming students, assisting student with their transition to the university. The bulk of students advised by ACES are first-year students and will transition to another academic department within three semesters. Most ACES student are handed-off to College and Departmental Advisors as they become degree seeking students with a declared program. Exceptions are Pre-nursing students and students in the Bridge program. The following are hand-off protocol for the various student groups:

- Exploratory Studies and Undeclared students are handed-off to colleges and departments as they declare their major.
- Pre-nursing students are advised by ACES through their application for non-freshman admission into the Basic BSN program. Students are handed-off to the School of Nursing if admitted, or remain with ACES if not admitted.
- Bridge Students are advised by ACES through their first academic year, and handed-off to departments in the summer following their first-year.
 - o ACES advisor discuss this transition with Bridge students throughout their first-year
 - o ACES requests that the new College Advising Center assign an advisor and have the new advisor connect with the student prior to the start of the student's sophomore fall semester
- Academically reinstated students are defaulted to Undeclared and advised by ACES until their GPA reaches a point required to declare their major.
- High School Guests and Non-degree Seeking students are advised by ACES until they become degree seeking students with a major.
- (*Changed 4Sept2019*) National Student Exchange (NSE) students work with a College Advising Center that is appropriate for their home institutions academic major.

Assigned Advisors

ACES assigns a specific Academic Advising Professional or Academic Advisor/Career Counselor to each student. Students continue to work with their assigned advisor throughout their time with ACES, until they successfully transition to their college/departmental advisor. This model allows advisors and students to build meaningful relationships during a student's time with ACES.

Since ACES is not a College and has no faculty, there is no faculty role in the academic advising plan. Students work with their assigned ACES advisor during their entire time with ACES. Upon declaring a major/degree program, the student will transition to their new college and work with that college for academic advising. Students are always welcome to stop into the ACES office with questions, but ACES will no longer serve as the primary academic advising office for these students.

Career Counseling

ACES is uniquely positioned to incorporate career planning with academic advising. As the central career services office at UW, ACES has both career services staff and career counselors to work with students to develop career goals. Career Counselors can help students understand the relation between their major, career, and life purpose.

ACES advisors and career counselors receive regular training from campus departments and colleges to stay current on available programs at UW. This allows ACES advisors to best help students through exploration of degree programs available at UW. In addition, ACES employs licensed career counseling staff that meet with students to help them develop values based career decision making.

Academic Advising as Teaching

The bulk of students served by ACES are first-time full-time college students. These students are new to the world of higher education. ACES utilizes both developmental and advising-as-teaching strategies when working with students. Students need to learn policies and procedures within the university setting and be guided through the beginning of their academic careers. By teaching students about what lies ahead they can be better informed to make good decisions regarding their academic and career choices.

Use of technology and communications

Each ACES Advisor utilizes Microsoft *Bookings* in order to facilitate student appointments. *Bookings* is an online appointment scheduling software that integrates with Microsoft Outlook, allowing students to have direct access to their advisors schedule and make appointments in real time. Students can make an academic advising appointment from their mobile device in 3-clicks.

The use of *Bookings* not only makes things easier for the student, but it frees front office staff from scheduling thousands of appointments per year.

D. STAFFING

Professional Staff

ACES has 9 Academic Advisors:

- Associate Director- Richard Miller
- Advising Manger – Ben Herdt
- Career Counseling Manager – Chrissy Renfro
- Special Projects Manager – Rebecca Despain
- Career Counselor/Advisor – Kristen Rigoni
- Career Counselor/Advisor – Alli Brayton
- Academic Advising Professional – Brianna Casey
- Academic Advising Professional – Carly Page
- Academic Advising Professional – Vacant

Due to the transitional nature of Academic Advising with the ACES student populations, caseloads tend to vary greatly between semesters. Because of this, it is critical that ACES staff are diligent about monitoring and updating caseloads. ACES has a goal keeping caseloads below the following standards:

- Associate Director – 100 students
- Managers – 150 students
- Career Counselors – 150 advising & 100 career counseling
- Advising Professionals – 200 students

Peer Advising

Beginning in Summer 2019, ACES is incorporating the use of Peer Advisors in working with ACES students. Peer Advisors within ACES will be trained through the Peer Advising class (ACES 3000). The class includes completing Levels 1 & 2 of the University Advisor Training, role playing, a mock advising session, and creating their academic advising philosophy.

ACES peer advisors work a variety of hours per week and serve various roles within ACES. Most of the projects and roles of peer advisors are student facing. For example, walk-in advising, residence hall advising and career services presentations, and mock-interviews.

Current ACES Peer Advisor: Allison Gross

This will be approved by the Advising Council and will also be reviewed annually.