RE-ENVISIONING ACADEMIC ADVISING

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Originating in the summer of 2016, the University of Wyoming (UW) engaged in a process to re-envision the current structure of Student Advising to address issues confronting student success. With the completion of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEM Plan) in January of 2017, the Advising Redesign Action Group (ARAG) was tasked by the Undergraduate Enrollment Governance Committee, chaired by Provost Kate Miller, with designing and recommending strategies and tactics for implementation of a redesigned professional advising system for undergraduate students. The aim for the ARAG task force, and its ultimate goal, was and remains to move the needle on retention, progression, and graduation rates in support of the goals laid out in the SEM and the UW Strategic Plans.

Currently, the UW advising process is transactional with high variance and inconsistency, negatively impacting student persistence to graduation. UW is preparing for significant growth at the undergraduate level over the next five years. Deploying a strong advising model grounded in providing students the information and tools to be successful will result in their retention and completion. To address the opportunities before us, a centralized advising structure will provide consistency and accountability for student success, paralleling objectives outlined in the University of Wyoming Strategic Plan. Consultation with key stakeholders across the campus spectrum, including faculty, students, staff, alumni, the Board of Trustees, and many others, along with research on national best practices has led to this proposal. It is fully vetted and ready for implementation beginning with the Fall 2018 Freshmen and Transfer cohorts. This implementation of this proposal will allow us to accomplish the following:
- Centralized advising with leadership, training and cohesive communication plans;
- Consistent advising access across the statewide system with clear points of contact;
- An advising system that is designed and monitored for equity and inclusiveness;
- Advising that is centered on student success; and
- Quality and supportive advisee-advisor relationships.

The ability to execute this plan will rely upon hiring a cadre of full-time professional advisors dedicated to year round engagement and service to students. Focused energy and dedication of these additional personnel will be the cornerstone in delivering the aforementioned objectives. Thus, the foremost need for successful implementation is approval of the proposed program fees by the Board of Trustees during the Fall 2017 semester.

Changing academic advising from a transactional action, to serve a utilitarian need, into a model where the student and their aspirations is the nucleus of the conversation and individual success the electrical current, will supply the paradigm shift for long term student success and progression to graduation. Urgency of consideration of this proposal is requested. Student success is in the balance, prompting a request for quick and expeditious support for implementation.

> **"Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience."**
> **—Richard Light**

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Re-envisioning Academic Advising at the University of Wyoming: Introduction

PURPOSE AND CHARGE

The University of Wyoming has identified undergraduate advising, with the primary focus on first year and transfer students, as a top priority for institutional improvement. With the completion of the UW Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEM Plan) in January of 2017, the Advising Redesign Action Group (ARAG) was tasked by the Undergraduate Enrollment Governance Committee, chaired by Provost Kate Miller, with designing and recommending strategies and tactics for implementation of a redesigned professional advising system for undergraduate students. The aim for the ARAG task force, and its ultimate goal, was and remains to move the needle on retention, progression, and graduation rates in support of the goals laid out in the SEM and the UW Strategic Plan.

In order to elevate impactful undergraduate academic advising and career planning to a level of prominence and focus at the University of Wyoming, this report articulates a clear structure designed to ensure student success through the provision of consistent well-trained advisors and an evidence-based undergraduate advising system. Ultimately, we believe we should strive for coherent and seamless work across high schools, UW academic colleges, UW-Casper, and our distance students. We will work to engage our community college partners in the implementation of a consistent advising system for shared students of the UW and community colleges.

A task force, comprised of experienced and knowledgeable staff and faculty, has met over the past year to evaluate the current undergraduate advising model, and through this white paper proposes changes that will bring centralized, seamless, uniform and quality consistent advising to main campus, UW-Casper and distance students. This model will provide an evidence-based, student-centered advising system that will serve all undergraduate students.

The charge to the ARAG was to evaluate what the University of Wyoming (UW) does from pre-matriculation, through the key first and second years, and continuing through graduation for all populations of UW students. Many UW colleagues work hard to ensure that students: 1) find the right academic/career track; 2) obtain assistance with immediate semester needs; 3) identify a clear graduation path; and 4) achieve post-graduation goals. The team took a 360-degree snapshot of UW's system and evaluated it against our students' needs. Given this evaluation, areas of excellence and systemic fixes to pipeline weaknesses have been identified and culminated in these proposed set of recommendations.

1 For a list of acronyms and definitions, please see Appendix One.

NEEDS AND VALUES

Quality, consistent, mandatory undergraduate advising is imperative to institutional success and student success and satisfaction. Advisors play key roles in recruitment, retention, persistence, and timely graduation of students. To achieve this, guiding principles have been established and shared across the institution and amongst institutional partners through the establishment of the ARAG, We recommend a model that is grounded in the following guiding principles:

• Centralized advising with leadership, training and cohesive communication plans;
• Consistent advising access across the statewide system with clear points of contact;
• An advising system that is designed and monitored for equity and inclusiveness;
• Advising that is centered on student success; and
• Quality and supportive advisee-advisor relationships.

In addition to these principles and aligned with national best-practices, UW's advising model should:
• Ensure the availability of high-quality academic advisors throughout the calendar year;
• Provide consistent academic and career support throughout a student's university life,
• Include advising transition points; provide direct and intentional focus on a strong foundation; Ensure a smooth handoff of a student to a different advisor when students progress or a change of major occurs;
• Include trained and certified professional advisors and faculty advisors/mentors coordinating in an integrated manner;
• Instill a culture of student responsibility for academic and career planning;
• Systematically train advisors and assess academic advising effectiveness;
• Be developmental and intentional in engaging students in the academic planning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are focused around achieving eight goals that align with the SEM and the UW Strategic Plan:

1. GOAL ONE: Embrace and actively promote a culture of student readiness and success that promotes overcoming barriers for all UW students, regardless of location.
2. GOAL TWO: Incorporate the principles of consistent, available and student-centered in advising for all first-year student and first-semester transfer students.
3. GOAL THREE: Provide training and certification for all academic advisors, including professional staff and faculty, to ensure consistent and accurate academic advising.
4. GOAL FOUR: Provide outlines for governance, accountability, and expectations, for first year and transfer advising to include clear pathways for degree completion for continuing students.
5. GOAL FIVE: Employ technology and online resources to support effective and efficient advising. Evaluate current technologies and advising tools for effectiveness and efficiency in the support of academic advising, student success, and retention and degree completion.
6. GOAL SIX: Instill a culture of student responsibility for academic and career planning through the expectation that students create a four-year academic and career path plans and engage in other systemic post-graduation planning
7. GOAL SEVEN: Offer exploratory studies tracks for first year students that will allow them to choose and succeed in an academic major through exploration of a more general field of study.
8. GOAL EIGHT: Commit to ongoing and meaningful assessment and continuous improvement of the new advising model.

These recommendations are designed to improve student retention, academic progression, performance, and time to graduation. We project that the exploratory studies program, including academic and career planning, will significantly reduce the number of times a student changes majors and reduce the number of students who graduate with excess hours. The proposed model will increase efficiency and provide clear pathways to completion for students entering as first year or first semester transfer through consistent, available, accurate, effective and student-centered advising.

The most noticeable improvements will be achieved through centralized advising overseen by the Advising, Career and Exploratory Studies Center ACES and supported by an Undergraduate Advising Council, who in conjunction with ACES, will review and evaluate undergraduate academic advising processes, communication and assessment All first year freshmen and first semester transfer students will be advised through this model.

Our recommendations are predicated on approval of the proposed program and mandatory student fees by the Board of Trustees during Fall semester 2017. The availability of this income is necessary to increase the cadre of professional advisors.

WHY CHANGE?
EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

At the most transitional times in a university student's life – the first semester of a transfer student's career, and the first year of the first-year student's career – students are commonly mystified by the new world they must learn to navigate. Education theorist Richard Light maintains that "Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience." An advisor who can guide the new or transitioning student through the many questions and decisions of academic life is often a key factor for a student's ultimate success in college.

Proactive advising that is intentional, reliable, and done in partnership with colleges, departments, and faculty has been instituted at many four-year universities in the past decade. Significant demographic change experienced by post-secondary educational institutions has meant that students from extremely diverse backgrounds, experiences, and expectations now attend university, and the traditional model of advisors and students meeting once a semester to pick courses simply does not work for 21st century students.

Intentional advising means working with students with the "goal of developing a caring and beneficial relationship that leads to increased academic motivation and persistence." (Varney, 2007). Research on student retention suggests that contact with a significant person within a university is a crucial factor in a student's decision to remain in college (Heisserer & Parette, 2002). Critically, academic advising is the only structured activity in which all students have the opportunity for on-going, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution. Therefore, advisors are the people most vital in retention efforts. When advisors make genuine connections with students, they can become the reason a student decides to stay in school and find a viable, sustainable path to graduation and careers. In addition, contacting students in a preventative mode helps them anticipate problems and learn problem-solving skills and strategies (Upcraft & Kramer, 1995).

Nationally, multiple coordinated models of advising exist such as one centralized advising office, hybrid shared advising models, and so forth – but in all cases, there are common elements:
- Professional advisors and faculty mentors are trained in advising policy, curricular issues, all aspects of the transition to college, and career/post-graduation preparation. They employ national best practices to focus on helping students overcome barriers and challenges in order to succeed.
- Advisors build a relationship with the student. This relationship assists students in navigating their way through new and complex processes, helps them select a major best suited to their academic preparation and career aspirations, helps them understand how and when to persist in a course integral to success in their major, accumulate the appropriate credits toward their degree, and take full advantage of financial and wellness support services.
- The approach is holistic. It is collaborative and integrated, multidisciplinary, and it helps students navigate support systems before they may even know they need them – services including registration, degree planning, counseling, financial aid guidance, academic mentoring and tutoring, internship exploration, international experiences abroad, and career preparation. It relies on outstanding and constant collaboration between all parts of campus, and strong communication. It helps identify students who are at risk of falling off track – before they do – and gives them guardrails to get back on.

Universities that have adopted campus-wide, proactive advising, or Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (IPASS) include many of our peer institutions. Colorado State University, Georgia State, University of New Mexico, Montana State, the University of Colorado, the University of Kansas, New Mexico State, University of Nevada-Reno, North Dakota State, South Dakota State, Oklahoma State, University of Rhode Island, Utah State, and the University of Utah, among many others, have adopted redesigns similar to those proposed here. First semester and second semester GPA and retention rates as well as progression rates from sophomore to junior and junior to senior year are documentably and significantly higher when advising systems are reformed to include integrated and proactive advising

ADVISING MODEL RE-ENVISIONED

Background and Introduction to the Recommended Undergraduate Advising Model

Per the Committee's charge, a 360 snapshot was taken of university-wide advising. Three questions were asked: How does advising work in your office? What training is provided? How is advising assessed? This snapshot revealed inconsistent academic advising models and communication within and across colleges and schools. We also looked at several other institutions' models for advising as well as national best practices provided from NACADA, the National Academic Advising Association. This research provided the basis for the redesigned advising model.

The re-envisioned undergraduate advising model is depicted in Figure 1 on the following page and is intended to meet students where they are in their academic journey and provide immediate guidance and advising that will progress students towards timely degree completion and academic/career success.
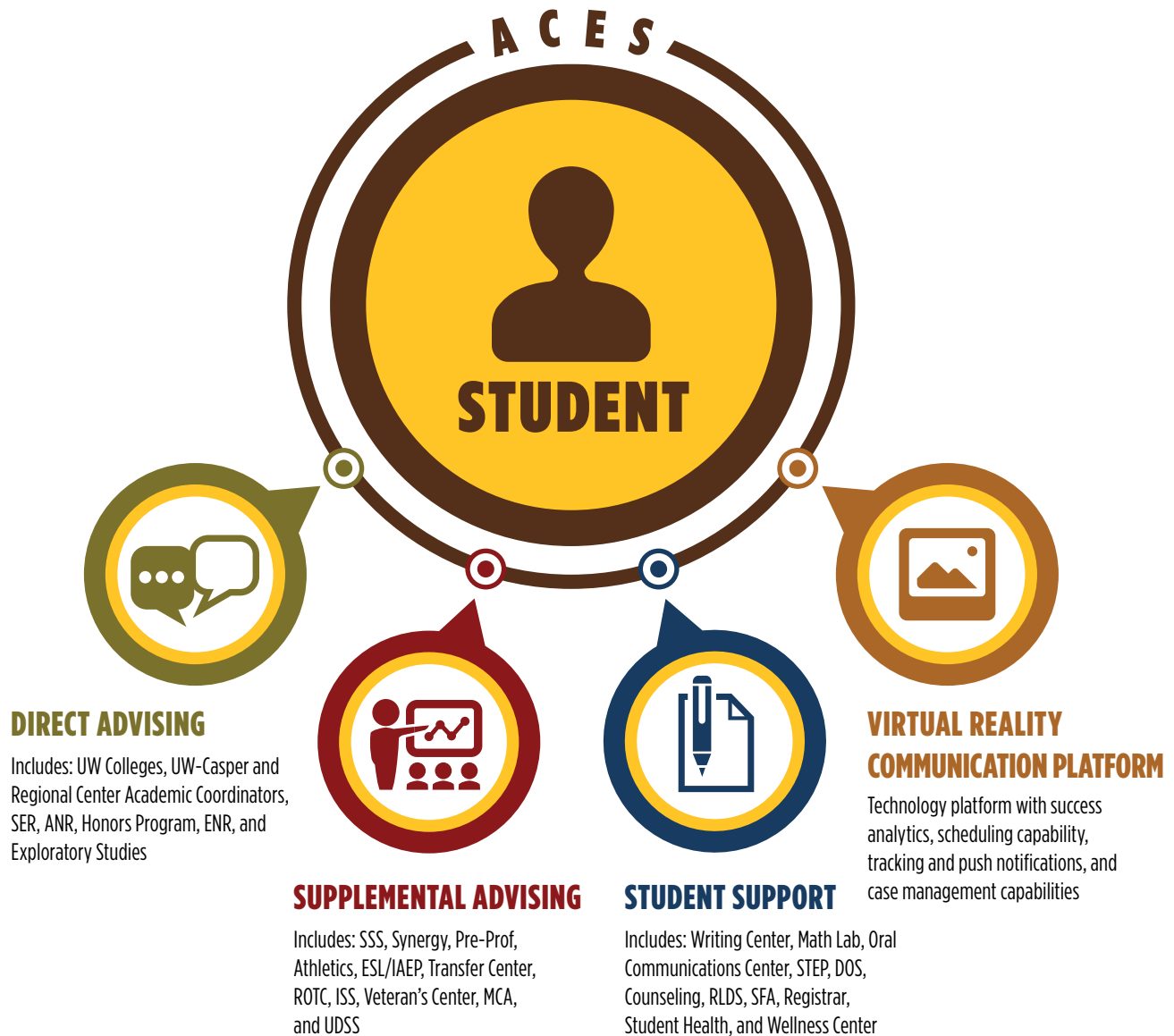
The model is specifically designed to ensure high-quality advising for the crucial first two semesters for an incoming first-year student or freshman, and for the crucial first semester of an incoming transfer student. If a transfer student has less than 30 credits, they will be provided the same two-semester advising experience as freshmen. This supports the desired outcome of reducing the incidences of students' changing majors and/or graduating with hours in excess of their degree requirements.

In the model, it is ACES that will possess the expertise and staff to: 1) oversee advising procedures and policies for the UW and UW-Casper campuses, in consultation with an Undergraduate Advising Council; 2) integrate communication plans and regular meetings/workshops to provide cohesiveness and collaboration among all advising teams; 3) ensure consistency in advising through advisor training and assessment regardless of residence (e.g., within ACES/UW-Casper/colleges/schools/departments); and 4) provide direct attention to incoming undeclared/exploratory freshmen and transfer students for the first year or first semester of their UW academic experiences.

At present, UW advisors hold a monthly convening and information-sharing meeting, "Advising Conversations, for people with advising as part of their job description. This is a convenient structure for announcements and presentations, but its configuration limits the chance for professional development and meaningful discussion of emerging advising challenges. To address this limitation, an Undergraduate Advising Council will be established to set and assess campus-wide goals for advising, processes, outcomes and technology and review College Advising plans to insure they address the goals of the redesign. This group, which will be coordinated and overseen by ACES, should embrace the vision and have a unified commitment to the success of the model. It will be the Advising Council's work to establish clear goals for advising and associated metrics, to assess progress on meeting those goals through collection and analysis of data related to the chosen metrics, and instituting a systematic process of improvement to advising campus-wide as a result of this analysis. The council will be comprised of one representative from each college/school and distance education. Through out the 2017-18 Academic Year, the Advising Council will work in tandem with the ARAG task force to tackle the immense amount of change engendered in this proposal. After the completion of this academic year, however, the Advising Council will replace ARAG in the SEM committee structure.

With the re-envisioned undergraduate model providing a framework to elevate impactful undergraduate advising and career planning, eight goals with associated action plans for undergraduate academic advising are proposed.

FIGURE 1. RECOMMENDED UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING MODEL

DIRECT ADVISING

Includes: UW Colleges, UW-Casper and Regional Center Academic Coordinators, SER, ANR, Honors Program, ENR, and Exploratory Studies

SUPPLEMENTAL ADVISING

Includes: SSS, Synergy, Pre-Prof, Athletics, ESL/IAEP, Transfer Center, ROTC, ISS, Veteran's Center, MCA, and UDSS

STUDENT SUPPORT

Includes: Writing Center, Math Lab, Oral Communications Center, STEP, DOS, Counseling, RLDS, SFA, Registrar, Student Health, and Wellness Center

VIRTUAL REALITY COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

Technology platform with success analytics, scheduling capability, tracking and push notifications, and case management capabilities

Goal 1: Embrace and Promote a Culture of Student Readiness and Success that Overcomes Barriers

Goal 2: First-Year Student and First-Semester Transfer Student Advising that is Consistent, Available, and Student Centered

Goal 3: Training and Certification For All Advisors to Ensure Consistency and Accuracy

Goal 4: Clear Governance and Accountability For Advising System

Goal 5: Use Advising Technology and Communications that Promote Student Success

Goal 6: Promoting Engaged Academic and Career Planning

Goal 7: Establishment of Exploratory Studies Tracks

Goal 8: Assessment and Continuous Improvement of Advising System

GOAL 1
EMBRACE AND PROMOTE A CULTURE OF STUDENT READINESS AND SUCCESS THAT OVERCOMES BARRIERS

Embrace and actively promote a culture of student readiness and success that promotes overcoming barriers for all UW students, regardless of location.

Action Plan 1

UW main campus advisors, Distance Academic Coordinators, and UW Casper advisors are the "Face of UW" to main-campus, location bound students and the state's communities. To operationalize this relationship with students who are not on the Laramie campus, distance advising, training, and assessment will focus upon

- Completion of ACES professional training by all main campus, Distance Academic Coordinators, and UW-Casper advisors;

- Required participation in an annual advisor retreat that brings together all UW professional advisors, distance advising coordinators, faculty advisors and select community college advisors who wish to attend.
- Assuring representation on the Advising Council for area academic and advising coordinators, and participation on a regular basis in Advising Conversations.

The required ACES training and an established Advising Council and Advising Conversations, will result in:
- An emphasis on providing excellent customer services to students from initial contact with the all advisors, including those on campus and those across the state, until graduation;
- Comprehensive knowledge among our main and off campus academic advisors and advising coordinators of the available academic programs and support services;
- More assistance for students in the development and ongoing achievement of their educational and professional goals;
- A greater emphasis on academic and career planning;
- Accountability for recruitment and retention of students;

Establishment and attainment of performance metrics related to measures of student success and persistence.

GOAL 2
FIRST-YEAR STUDENT AND FIRST-SEMESTER TRANSFER STUDENT ADVISING THAT IS CONSISTENT, AVAILABLE, AND STUDENT CENTERED

First year and first semester transfer advising will incorporate the principles of consistent, available and student-success-centered academic advising.

Action Plan 2
ACES will provide oversight and training to ensure entering UW students, confident in their major, and who meet program or college requirements will be advised in the respective college or department advising centers for a minimum of their first-year/first-semester. Collectively, designation of specific advising entities as experts in first-year/first-semester advising will provide consistent and direct attention to incoming freshmen, transfer students, and their unique needs.

Students who are admitted to distance or UW-Casper programs will be advised by the respective distance Advising Coordinator for their program or location. ACES would coordinate and provide training, policies and communication plans for Advising Coordinators.

Laramie campus students who are undeclared, admitted with support through Synergy, or who do not meet their respective college or department admission requirements will be directly advised through ACES. Students who enter as undeclared will be able to choose an exploratory studies track and have opportunities to engage in experiential activities to expose them to majors and careers. Each track will focus on providing coursework that will meet the USP requirements, address prerequisites for specific colleges/majors and put them on course to confidently declare a specific major.

In lieu of a single facility to house an inclusive campus first year advising center, centralized advising will be provided by professional and trained advisors located in specified smaller centers within colleges/schools, ACES, and UW-Casper. Each center will be adequately staffed and resourced to meet the guiding principles of the undergraduate advising model. As stated, ACES in conjunction with the Undergraduate Advising Council will oversee this centralized advising model. It is recommended that future space planning discussions include such a facility.

This advising model aligns with the plans in progress for improvement of the transfer student experience through the Transfer Success Center. Components of this proposal developed by that group include 1) clear and continuous communication with incoming transfer students through UW's customer relationship management system, including distance students; 2) strategic use of scholarships to improve transfer student numbers; 3) communication with students and advisors regarding the loading and evaluation of their transcripts; 4) articulation coordination utilizing best practices; 5) mandatory orientation for transfer students. In addition, the ARAG and ACES will develop of a process for clear handoffs based on input from colleges and with the Transfer Success Center. This will include trigger alerts for academic advisors and departments to be alerted once a transfer student has confirmed enrollment, and for academic advisors when enrollment and transcript loading is complete.

GOAL 3
TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR ALL ADVISORS TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY AND ACCURACY

Provide training and certification for all academic advisors, including main and off campus professional staff and faculty, to ensure consistent and accurate academic advising.

Action Plan 3

The basic tenet of this model is consistent advisor training and assessment provided through ACES, required prior to student information system access, and tracked by ACES staff. The training will incorporate UW specific information and national best-practices. ACES will provide and facilitate the completion of a multi-level training program for all professional (level 4 certification) and faculty (level 2 certification) undergraduate academic advisors. Community college partners will be invited and encouraged to complete this training as continuing education.

ACES will also be responsible for continuing education (online modules) required once per year. College/school advising teams can submit records of attendance at professional advising conferences which will be considered as a portion of the continuing education hours. New faculty who advise will be expected to complete at least two levels of training within six months of their hire date, and department heads will ensure that this training occurs. Supplemental non-academic advisors, such as University Disability Support Services

and Multicultural Affairs, should also complete at least two levels of training.

Upon completion of Advisor 1 and 2, an advisor will be authorized to release registration numbers.

Levels of training would include topics such as the following:

Advisor 1: Advisor Quick Start

A 20 minute online module that covers
- The purposes of mandatory academic advising,
- Basic understanding of National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) advising guidelines,
- How to use the student information system (WyoRecords)
- Essential policies and procedures,
- The University Studies Program (USP, UW's general education program) overview,
- Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations,
- Construction of reasonable, ethical and legal advising notes, and
- Essential campus resources for referral.

This module would also include a self-assessment of understanding on material presented.

Advisor 2: Advisor Essentials

This would entail a 15 hour in-person training on advising at UW. Material would cover:
- How to begin and end an advising session,
- Communicating expectations with students,

- USP requirements and detailed understanding of program/major degree requirements in primary areas of responsibilities,
- DegreeWorks (provides What-If scenarios and degree evaluations for students considering a major change and/or mapping courses for completion),
- Common academic policies and procedures (e.g., forms, FERPA, transfer credit, change of major, how GPA's are and are not affected by transfer & retake transfer credits, probation, suspension, etc.),
- Information on university structures, and colleges/schools and majors available at UW,
- Information on campus academic and non-academic support resources,
- Basic mastery of advising technology and Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeals,
- Early Alert communications
- How to map academic and career plans
- Initial training in the EPIC platform (the learning tool managed by ACES that helps students work through benchmarks towards academic success and career planning) and
- First Year Seminar advising.

All advisors completing this level would be trained in beginning appreciative advising, and learning the practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their goals.

Advisor 3: ACE Advisor
Material would include in-depth coverage of:
- The EPIC online platform,
- Advanced DegreeWorks functions,
- Co-curricular recommendations for the program major area, such as exploring internships and other experiential learning opportunities
- Academic policies and procedures,
- Academic and behavioral support resources,
- Making referrals, interpersonal and communication techniques,
- Advising suspended students on reinstatement policies, including taking classes elsewhere that will support their later re-entry to UW, and
- Initial training in the 2+2 plans and reverse transfer process for transfer students.

Advisor 4: Specialization & National Best Practices
This level would require in-person and online training, as well as attendance at appropriate local, state and national conferences related to advising. It also includes

- Intermediate familiarity with degree/major requirements of all majors and colleges,
- Mastery of advising technology,
- Assessing the advising experience,
- Intermediate understanding of advising issues surrounding various subpopulations such as first-generation, non-traditional, financially and academically at-risk students.
- Distance Advising – Advisors involved with distance students would receive specialized training in working with non-traditional student issues (i.e. working full time, families, single parent, etc.). Specialized training in procedures related to the admissions process, transfer evaluations, and enrollment in distance delivered courses
- Transfer Advising – Advisors working with transfer students would receive training in utilizing the 2+2 plans, various admissions and registrar policies and procedures related to transfer students, Wyoming and out-of-state community college articulation agreements, financial aid considerations, reverse transfer, etc.
- Other topics including advising undergraduate International Students, military veterans, NCAA athletes, other areas of specialization.

As the training modules are rolled out and used, they will be assessed by the Advising Council for appropriateness of topics and areas for improvement, addition, or deletion will be identified and changed. Faculty mentor/peer advisor training will be available (but not mandatory) through ACES.

Any person completing a level of training will be presented with a certificate of completion for their personnel files.

An advisor will receive a basic certification after completion of Advisor 1 and 2 training levels and six months of advising experience. Advanced certification provided after completion of advisor 3 and 4 training. Once certified, all advisors must successfully complete an annual online continuing education module which will provide a quick review of curricular requirements, policies and procedures, yearly updates, etc. Existing academic advisors could be excepted from completing all four levels of these requirements at the request of their department or unit head, but must still complete a round of refresher trainings within six months of the implementation of this system.

GOAL 4
CLEAR GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ADVISING SYSTEM

Provide outlines for clear governance, accountability, expectations, and processes for first year and transfer advising with clear pathways for degree completion for continuing students.

Action Plan 4
Establish a clear structure of accountability, which emphasizes that all faculty and staff have ownership of advising initiatives, student success, and completion goals. Included in this structure are feedback mechanisms for strong communications across all units.

The Advising Council would be a campus-wide advising council, separate from Advising Conversations, will be established to:
- Review College Advising plans to insure compliance with the stated goals of the redesign.
- Assure accountability and use evidence-based processes to continuously improve the advising system;
- Set and assess campus-wide goals for undergraduate advising, process, outcomes and technology;

- Be overseen by the AVP for undergraduate education and managed by ACES
- Embrace and champion the vision of this model and have a strong commitment to the success of undergraduate advising;
- Be comprised of one representative from each college or school and representatives of other critical constituent groups as identified by the AVP for Undergraduate Education. It is suggested that the representative either be an Associate Dean or a designee that has as a primary role in undergraduate academic advising.

ACES would be responsible for the following:
- Oversight of advising policies and procedures within colleges, schools, and programs – in Laramie and at our branch Casper campus and regional centers – to determine professional First Year and Transfer Advisor positions necessary to achieve target caseloads, and review caseloads and workload on an ongoing basis to accommodate changes in student demographics and trends;
- Establishing expectations for Professional Advisors through policies for, participation in, and monitoring of their recruitment, hiring, supervision, and evaluation;

- Providing advisor training and certification programs that incorporate UW academic requirements and national best practices for advising;
- Facilitating ongoing professional development opportunities for advisors in Laramie and at our branch campus and regional centers
- Facilitating ongoing conversations between advisors and academic department heads
- Providing technology and online resources that enable effective, efficient advising;
- Advising Exploratory Studies majors and unique enrollment classifications such as high school visitors and Board retirees, select Synergy students and reinstated students.
- Assessing and evaluating student satisfaction with and outcomes of advising; and
- Developing a culture of student responsibility for academic and career planning.

In the proposed model, responsibility for first-year and first-semester advising would be overseen by ACES. Whether physically located in ACES or within a college/program, first year and transfer advisors would be responsible for the following:
- Providing each new UW student with consistent advising during the transition to UW from summer orientation through their first year for first-year students, and from orientation through the first semester for transfer students;
- Advising first year students in a specific set of academic disciplines;
- Assisting students in mapping 4 year academic and career plans;
- Maintaining an appropriate caseload based on student need, departmental resources, and institutional priorities;
- Focusing on degree requirements and course selection, USP requirement fulfillment, major exploration, academic policies, and transition;
- Working with students to instill a level of ownership and responsibility for their academic future and success
- Providing feedback to units both on course bottlenecks in the current degree options and possible targets for improvement in the 4-year plans to ensure student success.
- Targeting intentional and intrusive advising efforts to students that miss program-identified marks and milestones that predict success in their programs, and to probationary and academically at-risk students, preferably with required advising sessions,

- Receiving training and certification from ACES prior to being assigned advisees,
- Processing all educational paperwork, add/drop, withdrawal, change of major, grade requirements, etc.
- Maintaining student files through campus communication platform.

To support the work of ACES, as well as the success of trained and professional advisors, colleges/schools/programs will be responsible for the following:
- Development and implementation of major-specific Undergraduate Advising Plans that addresses advising of first-year, transfer, and continuing students;
- Development and implementation of a plan for faculty to advise students on careers, research and experiential learning opportunities, elective selection, and graduate school or professional development (e.g., licensure, certification) options;
- Recruitment, hiring, supervision, and evaluation of the First Year/Transfer advisors in cooperation and consultation with ACES.
- Provision for mechanisms for meaningful feedback to/from advisors both on course bottlenecks in the current degree options and possible targets for improvement in the 4-year plans to ensure student success
- Ensuring that each unit has a sufficient number of certified advisors available to assist professional advisors during times of high demand.

GOAL 5
USE ADVISING TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS THAT PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS

Employ technology and online resources to support effective and efficient advising. Evaluate current technologies and advising tools for effectiveness and efficiency in the support of academic advising, student success, and retention and degree completion.

Action Plan 5
Convenient, accessible advising tools support and foster a culture of student responsibility and maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of advising and registration. In order to support the work described in the other goals, existing technology and online resources should be assessed and leveraged further; additional tools may need to be purchased and implemented.

At the outset, our current technology (such as Degree Works, Canvas, and other technology solutions) should be:

- Assessed by ACES and the Advising Council for current usage in each college/department
- Evaluated to determine concerns/impediments
- Used to move us away from paper degree evaluations by validating results of degree audits performed by Degree Works to increase confidence in this tool.

In the intermediate term, plans for purchasing an advising and student success software platform that will support academic advising, student success, and retention and degree completion through predictive data analytics, communication tools, linkup capabilities for academic advisors throughout the state, advisor scheduling functionality, and advising case management should be considered.

Advising technology and tools should incorporate predictive analytics to increase the probability of success and completion. For example, a careful evaluation of potential improvements to Early Alert and progression to degree via course completion and course taking patterns should be conducted. Results from this and other work should be used to guide targeted student communication plans to increase academic and student success. Similarly, a new data warehouse system will provide institutional data sets to identify student change-of-major patterns and better predict student performance and concerns

GOAL 6
PROMOTING ENGAGED ACADEMIC AND CAREER PLANNING

Instill a culture of student responsibility for academic and career planning through engaged creation of four-year career path plans and other systemic post-graduation planning to assist in the structure of the advising model and prepare students for life beyond the university. Detailed plans will be brought forth in the next year.

Action Plan 6
Students should be expected to come to advising sessions prepared to discuss their course selection, co-curricular needs (study abroad, Honors, double major, minor, etc.), and personal/professional development needs. Advisors will provide students with an advising checklist to reinforce the expectations of the student prior to advising. As we transition from the transactional model,

these sessions should be a larger conversation on choice of major, academic and career planning and occur more frequently.

Mandatory new student orientation for both first-time and transfer students will lay the groundwork for this expectation. EPIC online modules would be used by students, advisors, and faculty collaboratively to cement the concept of advising preparation, self-assessments, degree requirements, and career readiness.

Development of high-level design-thinking in the First-Year Seminar and other early-stage curricula via the USP will reinforce this culture of student accountability A well designed and assessed First Year Experience will support students in these first year/transfer year transitions.

Career planning, substantive resume building, and career readiness will be part of the advising conversations in both the professional and faculty models beginning with choice of major and EPIC training. This will be substantiated through faculty mentoring.

GOAL 7
ESTABLISHMENT OF EXPLORATORY STUDIES TRACKS

Offer exploratory studies tracks for first year students that will allow them to choose an academic major based on exploration of field of study and academic success.

Action Plan 7
In consultation with an academic committee, ACES would develop five new exploratory tracks to assist students to reframe the current undeclared major and provide guided exploration to expose students to various fields of study and career options, it will be designed to guide students for one year towards an existing four year degree. Included coursework would be relatively portable across majors. Exploratory tracks will be designed and implemented through a campus-wide planning committee consisting of faculty members and managed by ACES, and in consultation with Faculty Senate. Upon approval of the tracks, ACES would coordinate with the Learning Resource Network (LeaRN) to develop these exploratory tracks into themed learning communities. In addition, ACES would coordinate with Admissions to help market these tracks to generally undeclared students.

National best practices will be highly influential when coordinating the proposed tracks. Experiential learning activities and residence hall programming will be designed to guide students in self-discovery of their interests, skills, and career and degree options. This could include employer panels, faculty led field experiences and volunteer opportunities etc. We would actively and continuously measure outcomes associated with exploratory studies majors to ensure they are robust, impactful, and appropriate.

GOAL 8
ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF ADVISING SYSTEM

Commit to ongoing and meaningful assessment and continuous improvement of the new advising model.

Action Plan 8
Best advising practices and assessment standards would be established with the guidance of ACES and the Advising Council. The content of the training modules, professional development recommendations and requirements, and specific interventions, methods, and practices developed for academic advisors to use would be assessed using data on student progression and student performance. Data collected on the impact of these development requirements would be used in design and content decisions for the training. Predictive analytics tools would be used and checked against actual student outcomes to guide changes in advising policies and procedures that need alteration.

Development of assessment measures would be focused on three primary areas:
- Advisor effectiveness,
- Advising program effectiveness, and
- Training and development requirements effectiveness.

The Advising Council would work with Deans and program heads to ensure the advising system course-corrects as necessary and would make evidence-based changes based on these assessments.

Goals 5 through 8 provide the scaffolding that will be built out over the next one to three years via the recommendations from the other SEM Teams – Orientation and Onboarding, Student Success Action and Transfer Success teams. The University Strategic Planning process will also inform these goals through action items to increase student retention and completion.

TIMELINE

Fall 2017
- Fees approved by Trustees
- Advising Council membership approved
- Colleges develop College Advising Plans
- ARAG continues to meet to work on developing transition plans to ramp up to Fall 2018, including;
    - o Working with department heads for curated lists of advisors who will be designated to be trained and part of new model
    - o Developing job description recommendations
    - o Developing and complete training modules architecture
    - o Discussion of integration of supplementary advising
- Sub-task forces will begin:
    - o Working with Faculty Senate and faculty in relevant departments to develop packages of coursework for Exploratory Studies
    - o Working with Faculty Senate and administration on valuing faculty advising in job descriptions and RT&P process
    - o Developing RFP for software platform to complement model
    - o Developing short- and long-term space recommendations for optimal locations for advising clusters

Spring 2018
- College Advising plans approved by Advising Council
- Job Descriptions approved by Advising Council
- Colleges begin staffing with professional advisors
- Advisor training levels 1 and 2 available to main and off campus advisors
- Students admitted into Exploratory concentration tracks

Summer 2018
- Training and Certification available for campus and off campus advisors and faculty
- Advising redesign models are being deployed in the colleges

Fall 2018
- Advising Council fully established, full implementation

CONCLUSION

The Advising Redesign Action Group submits the following recommendations to the Undergraduate Enrollment Governance Group and requests expedited review of the report.

1. Embrace and actively promote a culture of student readiness and success that promotes overcoming barriers for all UW students, regardless of location.
2. First-year student and first-semester transfer student advising will incorporate the principles of consistent, available and student-success-centered academic advising.
3. Provide training and certification for all academic advisors, including professional staff and faculty, to ensure consistent and accurate academic advising.
4. Provide outlines for clear governance, accountability, expectations, and processes for first year and transfer advising with clear pathways for continuing students.
5. Employ technology and online resources to support effective and efficient advising. Evaluate current technologies and advising tools for effectiveness and efficiency in the support of academic advising, student success, and retention and degree completion.
6. Instill a culture of student responsibility for academic and career planning through engaged creation of four-year career path plans and other systemic post-graduation planning to assist in the structure of the advising model and prepare students for life beyond the university.
7. Offer exploratory studies tracks for first year students that will allow them to choose an academic major based on exploration of field of study and academic success.
8. Commit to ongoing and meaningful assessment and continuous improvement of the new advising model.

We further recommend that the Undergraduate Enrollment Governance Group directs that the ARAG task force immediately commence work to ensure the implementation of these recommendations to be effective in the Fall of 2018. To do so, we recommend that the Provost and the Undergraduate Enrollment Governance Group tasks ARAG to:

- Begin detailed transition planning, including training module development.
- Seek nominations from the Deans for representatives to the Advising Council.
- Appoint an Exploratory Studies taskforce to include faculty and advisors to implement the tracks.
- Evaluate technology needs for communications and predictive analytics.
- Work with Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, and Academic Affairs to ensure that advising is appropriately valued and rewarded in job descriptions and duties.
- Study and make recommendations to the space planning group to consider allocating existing or new space for a true First Year Advising facility.

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APPENDIX ONE: DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Trained Advisor: A trained advisor is any faculty or staff member who has completed advisor training modules, and is annually updating their training.
Professional Advisor: A professional, trained advisor is someone whose job description entails mostly academic advising.
Advising Certification: Advising certification is a professional designation that is awarded based on training and experience outlined by the Advising Council and ACES.
WyoRecords – University Student Information systems accessible to students, faculty and advisors.
Degree Works – interactive academic planning tool that allows students to use What If scenarios and map their degree path to completions.
STEP – academic tutoring center for high-challenge courses

EPIC – online academic success and career planning tool available to all students
ACES – Advising, Career Services, and Exploratory Studies
DOS – Dean of Students
ELC/IAEP – English Language Center/Intensive Academic English Program
ISSO – International Students and Scholars Office
MCA – Multicultural Affairs
SSS – Student Success Services, part of Student Educational Opportunity.
SFA – Scholarships and Financial Aid
RLDS – Residence Life and Dining Services
UDSS – University Disability Support Services

RE-ENVISIONING ACADEMIC ADVISING

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Report to the Undergraduate Enrollment Governance Committee
from the Advising Redesign Action Group

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