Comprehensive Academic Advising Plan

School of Business Administration

November 21, 2014

Overview

This document outlines the manner in which the School of Business Administration incorporates advising as part of its efforts to realize academic excellence by fostering student success. It addresses the guidelines for advising responsibility in workload assignments, explores opportunities for staff and faculty recognition for advising excellence, presents the current model of advising for graduate and undergraduate students, expands upon the role of third and fourth year students as peer mentors, and points out the particulars of first year advising. Additionally, it elaborates upon the efforts pertinent to continuous process improvement in advising.

Guidelines for Advising Responsibilities in Workload Assignments

The workload weight for teaching and advising, as presented in the workload sheet, is a combined weight. For tenure track faculty, the usual amount is 40% of workload. The allocation within the combination is as follows: for each unit of teaching and advising responsibility, roughly 90% for teaching and 10% for advising. Therefore, someone with a 40% teaching allocation in workload would be evaluated 36% on evaluations of teaching (which incorporates new course development and ongoing instructional innovation) and 4% on advising evaluations by students.

For non-tenure track lecturers and senior lecturers, workload includes but two categories: teaching and service. Advising responsibilities may be present in both. In the case of teaching, the workload weight is similar to that of tenure-track faculty. The allocation within the combination is as follows: for each unit of teaching and advising responsibility, roughly 90% for teaching and 10% for advising. Therefore, someone with a 60% teaching allocation in workload would be evaluated 54% on evaluations of teaching (which incorporates new course development and ongoing instructional innovation) and 6% on advising evaluations by students. In the case of service, the percentage of workload within service is specified in the workload and evaluation is adjusted to incorporate the joint weight of advising as part of teaching and advising as part of service.

The average advising load for School of Business faculty members is 30 advisees per semester. Significant variations may occur because of programmatic needs and expectations for specific faculty (i.e., new faculty are exempt from advising for their first year to allow sufficient time to kick-start their research program and class preparation). In extreme cases, individual faculty members and the Dean determine how heavy advising loads impact the faculty member’s workload.

The advising evaluation instrument administered to students at the end of each semester includes the following statements designed to measure students’ agreement (Table 1). Students are provided with illustrations of behaviors related to the statements. Except where noted in the table that follows, responses are on a scale where 1 equals strongly disagree and 5 equals strongly agree.

Table 1: Current Advisor Evaluation Instrument, Undergraduates, School of Business Administration

Statement	Examples
I, rather than my advisor, take initiative in seeking advice.	I don't wait until the last minute. I know when my advisor's office hours are. I attend career advising presentations.
I prepare for our discussion before the meeting.	I know where to find my advising file. I attend the meeting with questions and/or ideas/plans. If the meeting is about course scheduling, I attend with a tentative schedule for my advisor and I (sic) to discuss.
I accept responsibility for plans made in advising meetings.	I understand that there are conditions that my advisor may not be aware of (prerequisites for non-BSAD upper level classes). I know that my advising file is available for me to review and that it is my responsibility to make sure that I am fulfilling requirements. I understand the curriculum and know where to go to clarify questions.
My advisor is available.	Has a known system for making appointments. Allots adequate time for advising meetings. Extends office hours during registration periods.
My advisor is responsive.	Responds to inquiries, requests for meetings in a timely fashion. Schedules meetings in a timely fashion. Keeps appointments and is on time.
My advisor is knowledgeable.	Knows current University and School policies & procedures. Understands required courses and elective options in my curriculum. Can suggest appropriate University resources when needed such as learning co-op, health center, etc.
My advisor shows concern and respect for me as a person.	Demonstrates genuine interest in assisting me. Shares rapport with and supports me. Respects my concerns.
My advisor encourages beneficial discussion.	Presents options and alternatives for me to consider. Helps to elicit pros and cons of options. Helps me think through various options in both my academic and non-academic life.
My advisor gives sound advice.	Helps me make decisions consistent with my stated objectives. Offers appropriate, helpful advice re: professional and career opportunities in advisor's own field of expertise. When needed, refers me to advisors in the appropriate discipline.
My advisor helps me assess my progress.	Helps me assess and verify my records. Helps me understand curricular requirements. Helps me assess my progress with respect to requirements.
Where you receive advice (check all that apply)	I get advice from: Other faculty members Student Peer Mentors Students other than Peer Mentors BSAD Student Services BSAD website Student Services Handbook (printed version) Sources other than those listed above I do not need advising help
Overall, I am very ____________ with my advisor/advisee relationship	1=Very Dissatisfied 5=Very Satisfied

Recognition for Staff and Faculty Excellence in Student Advising

Staff recognition for the provision of excellent student advising is already encompassed in the Staff Recognition Award. Nominees for this award come from staff and faculty within the School of Business. Details about the process for nominating and selecting staff awards can be found at:

http://www.uvm.edu/business/documents/Deans_Staff_Award.doc

The school does not currently offer a "Best Faculty Advisor" award. The current perspective is that faculty recognition for this award should recognize differences in the advising loads of new tenure-track, established tenure-track, and non-tenure-track full-time lecturers and senior lecturers. But, given the current low response rates to evaluations of advising effectiveness, there are many misgivings about establishing and managing an award. If instituted, faculty believe it should come from student nominations. The details of an advising award for faculty and the implications for data collection will be further explored in the coming semester. This discussion is likely to involve a review of the advising evaluation instrument.

Model of Advising Across Period of Enrollment

The faculty's primary role as an academic advisor is to facilitate students' intellectual development and to help coherently map this development into career development (internships, permanent jobs, graduate study, etc.) Faculty members shall be familiar with the ways in which the school's courses support career development in their particular discipline. Faculty members play an important role in providing letters of recommendation and references.

For graduate students, graduate programs' Directors, with assistance from the Graduate Programs Coordinator, are responsible for providing graduate advising. It is important to recognize that graduate students in the School of Business Administration are in professional masters' programs; advising largely pertains to readiness to enroll in courses and career counseling. Other faculty members may be called upon to provide guidance should their expertise be of value.

Undergraduate students shall use the expertise resident in student services to inform decisions about course sequencing, university guidelines and processes, courses offered in other colleges pertaining to their minors, and personal counseling issues. Students are responsible for understanding their degree requirements and for planning their schedules in accordance with their professional and personal goals. The design of the Curriculum Audit Tracking System (CATS Audit) helps students understand their degree requirements and remaining requirements. UVM's Career Center's 4 Year Plan for Career Success is a tool to support career readiness planning.

The school's model of expected student behaviors is summarized in the following table (Table 2):

Table 2: Expected Student Engagement in their Academic Success

First Year	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
• Learn strategies for managing academic and social interests • Develop and enhance technology skills • Get involved in clubs & activities related to major and interests • Attend panels, networking events, and career fairs • Write a resume and cover letter	• Consider minors, study abroad, etc. • Meet with Career Counselor to revise resume & cover letter • Consider taking on leadership roles in student organizations • Attend panels, networking events, and career fairs and practice professional business correspondence • Research and assess Business Discipline Concentration areas • Apply for summer internships • Participate in on-campus info sessions and recruiting	• Intern and connect with people working in your desired field • Hold leadership positions in clubs and other organizations • Select required Theme and optional Concentration within the Business School • Participate in mock interviews and attend career fairs • Attend panels & networking events • Submit revised resume to Employer Relations advisor • Participate in on-campus info sessions and recruiting EARLY	• Participate in on-campus info sessions and recruiting EARLY • Self-directed job search activities • Develop depth in field • Attend panels & networking events • Attend career fairs • Submit revised resume to Employer Relations advisor

First-year support primarily provided by professional advisors within Student Services in collaboration with Career advisors, Honors College advisors, and enrollment in BSAD 010, The Business Enterprise.

Sophomore through Senior year support provided by professional advisors within Student Services in collaboration with Career advisors, Honors College advisors, and faculty in the School of Business (sophomore students are reassigned to faculty advisors based on their selected theme or concentration or by student request).

Business Minors (approximately 150) work collaboratively with professionals in Student Services and an assigned School of Business faculty advisor.

Transfer students and students at risk continue to be advised by professionals in Student Services given the intricate nature of their schedules and counseling needs.

Engagement of Third and Fourth Year Students in Advising

Students in the third and fourth year are engaged as peer mentors to first-year students through incorporation in BSAD 010, The Business Enterprise. During this course, upper-level BSAD students serve as TAs for the discussion groups – guiding students on campus resources, curriculum plans, career planning, and offering general guidance on industry trends. These students are trained by the BSAD 010 instructor and receive curriculum information from Student Services.

Third and fourth year students serve as TAs for BSAD 015, Business Communications. This course is offered to first-year students in their spring semester and TAs provide support with grading and other assistance.

In addition, we invite upper-level students to serve as peer advisors during peak registration periods to assist students with course selection and registration planning. Peer Advisors volunteer in Student Services and are generally available to work with the first-year cohort.

Third and fourth year students serve as leaders in the various business clubs providing opportunities for their development while sharing insight and industry perspective to first and second year students. Clubs are actively engaged with faculty and alumni through speaker series, networking trips to Boston and NYC, and sponsor regular meetings to discuss industry trends and analysis.

First Year Orientation to Academic Advising and Provision of Other Information

Advisors in the School of Business work with students through all phases of their academic planning from pre-enrollment through alumni status.

- Introduction to advising and curriculum during admitted student visit day presentations.
- Communication with first-year students during the month of May – between enrollment and orientation. This communication introduces them to their advisor and prepares them for the orientation experience.
- Advisors present during orientation about support, services, and degree requirements. Advisors are on-site during orientation to assist student with understanding the curriculum requirements and how it shapes their career goals. Students leave with a fall schedule in hand. All students are introduced to the catalogue, advising handbook generated by Student Services, and the CATS audit system. All tools to support student advising.
- During July and August, advisors continue to work with students regarding transfer credits, major changes, and any other transitional related questions.
- During the fall semester, advisors work with the faculty member and TAs from BSAD 010 in support of first-year students developing a four-year curriculum plan and four-year career plan. The curriculum plan allows students to better understand the degree requirements and align them with their goals for choosing their selected theme (entrepreneurship, global, and sustainable), their selected concentration (accounting, finance, marketing, business analytics), and their selected minor. Students can then plan their interests in relation to the Honors College experience, study abroad, internships, and double degree options. The career plan aligns with the University's four-year career plan initiative.

- All first-year students have advising holds placed on their accounts which requires them to go through advising during their first semester (administered through BSAD 010) and their second semester (group or individual advising).
- All students who do not register for courses are contacted by a member of the Student Services team to discuss their plans and for guidance to be provided.
- Communications to first-year students are a must through emails, weekly newsletters, drop-in advising, and website development.

Continuous Process Improvement

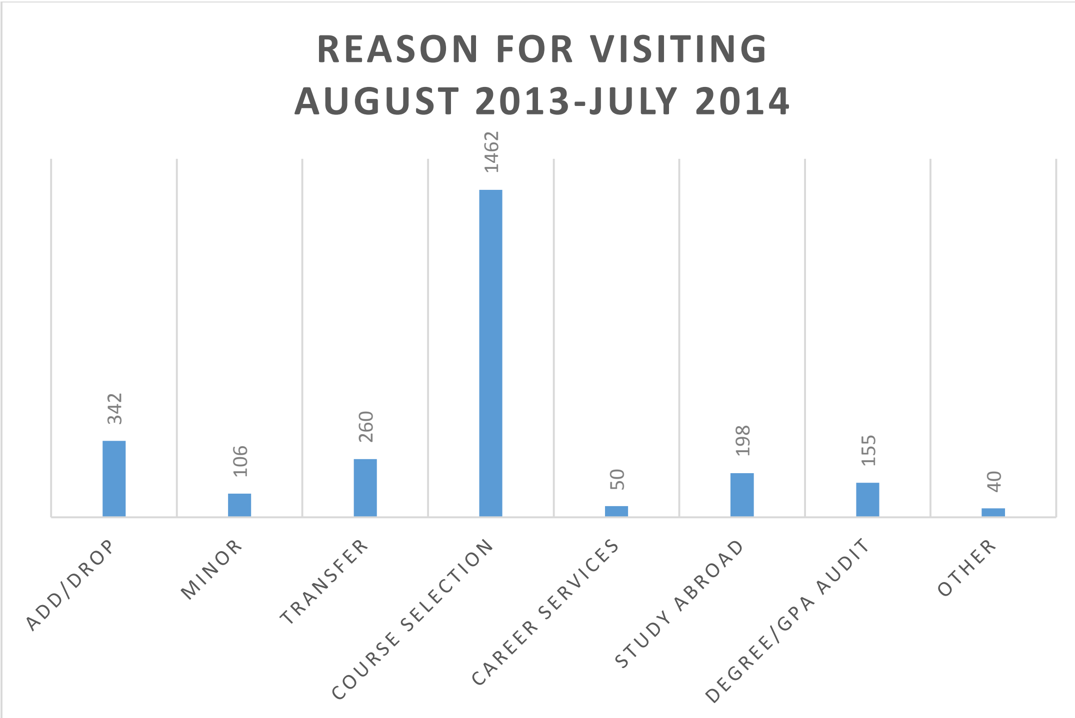
Ongoing development of the school's professional advisors through participation in national associations, annual faculty advisor training, and pilot projects are used to continuously improve the school's student advising.

The School of Business actively supports *professional development* of its advisors. The Director of Student Services has served on the Region I board of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) since 2006. Within the association, ideas are shared through conferences, drive-ins, webinars, conference calls, and electronic list-serve communications. Advisors in Student Services regularly attend campus, regional, and national conferences allowing information to be shared and to inform changes based on best practices. This also supports continuous process improvement.

The School of Business International Advisor is a member of the NAFSA International Educators which supports learning and supporting of international students attending UVM and of domestic students selecting to study abroad.

Each year, *faculty advisor training* is held regarding curriculum and process changes. Each faculty member is given a group of advisees to work with and collaboration with Student Services is continuous should faculty have questions or need assistance.

Advising assessments are key to improving services. As shown below (Table 3), analysis of the reasons students visit with professional advisors in Student Services is used to manage capacity and expertise. During the 2014-2015 year, we moved to an electronic sign-in process so we can better capture the reasons for student visits. The completion of the previously addressed advising survey (Table 1) at the end of each semester offers insight to specific individual targets for improvement.



This fall, the School of Business *piloted the FIG (first-year interest group)* in cooperation with Student Life. The FIG program aligns first-year students in the same three Business Core classes of BSAD 010, EC 011, and MATH 019. Students attend an extra discussion group to further enhance their connection to the University and campus resources. We are currently assessing this program and plan to offer it again during the fall 2015 semester.

Moving forward, three focused initiatives are in play.

First, we are working with John Sama in the Living & Learning Center to offer a Residential Learning Community related to the three strategic themes of entrepreneurship, global business, and sustainable business. Connecting living communities with academic learning promotes engagement and supports student retention.

Second, Student Services is making a case to extend their role in professional advising from all first students to all first and second year students. Advisors in Student Services are seeing equal number of sophomores as they are first-year students. During the 2013-2014 academic year, advisors in Student Services worked had 618 sophomore meetings (30%) and 590 first-year meetings (28%). The number of individual first-year meetings in lower as a result of the collaborative work done in BSAD 010. Retaining sophomores allows for continued development of their career plans before they move into their upper-level course sequence and work with their faculty on internship, career, and industry goals. Student Services advisors work with students during this time is critical to maintaining and increasing retention standards through consistency of advising. UVM and the School of Business pride ourselves on connections and keeping students within Students Services during their first two-years supports this goal. In addition, the School of Business Core curriculum requires students to complete all 11 courses by end of sophomore year with certain grades. Often times during the first two years, conversations happen about major and minor choices and Student Services professionals are best equipped to answer these questions and provide support and referrals to students as needed. Data is also collected for students should they transfer out to a new major or to another institution. Advisors work with each student regarding this processes and collaboration is done with the Dean of Students Office through administration of the Intent to Leave Survey.

Finally, members of the student services staff and faculty will review the advising evaluation instrument to determine if it appropriately reflects the nature of the current advising process and to identify opportunities to collect additional information to better inform future improvements to student advising.