

Making Difference

The University of Vermont College of Education and Social Services (CESS)

College of Education & Social Services (CESS) Advising Plan April 10, 2015

To provide context for understanding advising in CESS, it is important to understand the overall emphasis placed on advising in the College as a whole. We place a strong emphasis on quality advising as noted in our faculty-developed mission statement, we are dedicated: “to educate and prepare outstanding professionals in education, social work, and human services” and to maximize “human potential and the quality of life for all individuals, families and communities.” We have an ethical responsibility to ensure our graduates are prepared for their professional positions through preparation that requires high quality teaching and advising. Our professional programs are required to meet rigorous national and state standards for accreditation and licensing. As such, there is little room for error with student advising as it could increase student time to complete their degree or have an impact on a student’s ability to obtain a professional license. An indicator of CESS’ long-term focus on quality is evident in the *Strengthening Academic Advising at UVM* report. According to the NSSE data, for over a decade CESS has been ranked near the top in student satisfaction with teaching and learning and quality advising in the University. Our plan reflects this long-term ethical and professional commitment to quality advising and teaching. The CESS Advising Plan also encompasses our emphasis on student retention, which we see as an extension of our advising plan.

The CESS Advising Plan is comprised of five parts: 1) Addressing the recommendations of the *Strengthening Academic Advising at UVM* report, 2) Academic Advising, 3) Dean’s Office/Student Services Office Procedures, 4) Students-at-Risk protocol, and the 5) Individual Departmental Plans including Department of Education (DOE), Department of Social Work (DSW), and the Department of Leadership & Developmental Sciences (DLDS), which are Attached in Appendix A.

1. Addressing the Strengthening Academic Advising at UVM Report

Recommendation 1: Include guidelines for advising responsibilities in workload assignments, in accordance with the collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and clearly indicate how advising is considered in performance reviews.

Advising is a priority in CESS, which is noted in our RPT document and in our annual review process. In evaluating advising, we follow the CBA guidelines that note that, “Interest and skill in the general guidance and academic advising of students will be an important consideration for reappointment, promotion and tenure.” For RPT and the Annual Review process faculty have to submit quantitative data about number of advisees, and whether advisement includes primary or secondary responsibility (e.g. primary advisor to doctoral candidate vs. serving on dissertation committee). Additionally, each department administers academic advising evaluations each year in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data, which is then used by the faculty

member to improve their advising and by the departmental chairperson to assess the quality of advising during the annual review process. Advising is considered in performance reviews as a component of teaching. Depending on a faculty member's workload, performance is evaluated in three categories; Teaching/Advising, Research, and Service. Performance is the weighted according to the distribution of teaching, advising, research, and service on each faculty member's workload.

Recommendation II: Recognize faculty members and staff members who excel at student advising.

We have three annual awards through which we are able to recognize faculty and staff who excel at student advising. Two awards are targeted to faculty. The first is the *Jackie Gribbons' Award for Extraordinary Service* and the second is the *John Dewey Educator's Award for Excellence in Teaching*. In CESS, when it comes to recognizing faculty who excel at student advising, we recognize that excellence in advising crosses both teaching and service responsibilities. For example, faculty who coordinate programs as part of service responsibilities often spend countless hours advising students who are not on their official advising load. Additionally, excellence in advising is seen as an extension of excellence in teaching. In order to recognize staff excellence, last year CESS implemented the *CESS Making a Difference Staff Award*. This award recognizes outstanding staff contributions and can include advising excellence.

Recommendation III: Ensure developmentally responsive advisement sessions by class year (First-Year through Senior Year) and specialty needs (e.g. Internships, Academic Advisor/Concentrations, Study Abroad) coordinated by faculty members and/or advising professionals.

With CESS's focus on professional education, attention to developmentally responsive advisement is woven into the structure and design of each program including embedding the internships needed for licensure within program requirements. The program faculty and the Student Affairs work together in partnership to ensure students are provided with developmentally responsive advising. Faculty in each program maintains contacts with community partners to ensure appropriate placement of students within their internships. Study abroad opportunities have been developed for students via collaboration between programs and the CESS Student Services Office to ensure students can study abroad and still meet the requirements of their programs.

Recommendation IV: Seek ways to engage and involve third and fourth year students as peer mentors to first-year students in designated first-year courses

As a professional school, proper advising is critical for student success. Academic advisors play a crucial role in supporting student success in their programs. Due to the responsibility of advising for professional licensure and the requirements of state and national standards, upper level student mentoring is more informal and focused on supporting the work of the academic advisor rather than serving as a replacement. The Department of Education (DOE) utilizes 3rd and 4th year students as peer mentors informally and Human Development & Family Studies (HDFS) in DLDS and Social

Work are planning to explore this possibility for their first year courses. In CESS, though, academic advisors and the CESS Student Affairs Office serve in the primary role as academic advising professionals. Student mentors are seen as providing additional support but are not seen as responsible for the academic advising of their peers.

Recommendation V: Ensure all first-year students receive, during their first semester, an orientation to academic advising and associated roles and responsibilities, as well as information about the Four-Year Plan for Career Success.

As a professional school, attention to career planning is woven into the design and structure of each program so that students are prepared to enter the professional market once they graduate. Internships are embedded within each program. Program Coordinators and Faculty meet with students initially during June Orientation and each department provides first-year advising including a first semester orientation. We are exploring the possibility of creating a college-wide first semester orientation, which would be coordinated by the Student Services Office. Our point person with Career Services is currently working with college faculty to consider ways of supporting student career success and thinking about how to incorporate the Four-Year Plan for Career Success within each program's existing four-year professional plan.

2. Academic Advising and Faculty Communications

- CESS students are assigned a faculty advisor in their program of study upon enrollment.
 - The CESS Enrollment Management Professional advises undeclared students. This person is knowledgeable in all undergraduate CESS programs and has an extensive advising background.
- Program Coordinators serve as secondary advisors to students. They also advise students during June Orientation.
- Faculty advisors meet with students prior to each registration period to review academic plans and create course schedules.
- CESS students' progress through our programs in a cohort model, which builds strong relationships among peers and with faculty members.
- CESS faculty members use the Academic Alert system and report any student concerns to the Assistant Dean for Student Administration (ADSA).

3. Dean's Office/Student Services Office Procedures

- The Student Services Office serves as the hub for academic advising questions by both students and faculty year around.
- First-time first-year students are block-scheduled into courses to ensure appropriate course selection.
- New transfers (internal and external) are assisted with registration to ensure appropriate course selection. The Office reviews all transfer student records to optimize their use of UVM and non-UVM courses in CESS degree programs while maintaining our commitment to academic excellence and Vermont Agency of Education standards.

- The Student Services Office serves as the primary academic advisor during UVM break-periods and summer months.
- After semester grades are closed, all CESS students undergo an academic review in order to assess performance. Students who have not performed well academically receive a communication from CESS Student Services, and are often required to meet with the ADSA.
- When students experience medical or personal matters, the ADSA or her designee communicates with faculty on behalf of the student.

4. Students At-Risk Protocol

- Any student seeking a medical withdrawal from a course or the full semester must meet with the ADSA.
- Students who are identified as at-risk meet with the ADSA. This meeting is to provide support, offer resources, review and/or revise academic plans.
- Any student who seeks a change in student status or to transfer from CESS typically communicates with the CESS Dean and/or ADSA.
- Pre-exit conversations are held with any student who seeks a change of student status or desires to transfer. This conversation seeks to understand why a student desires to terminate their academic career in CESS. If CESS can do anything, within reason, to retain the student in CESS and/or at UVM, we will.
- Upon notification of students with Student Financial Services holds, CESS sends these students a communication offering guidance to ensure post-hold academic success (i.e. holding spaces in CESS classes for students who are unable to register due to the hold).
- CESS has developed a Student Success Team (SST) to address students who are not performing well or who are exhibiting signs of at-risk behavior. The SST meets with students to assess their behaviors and will refer them to the university-wide Student-At-Risk team if necessary.

5) Individual Department Advising Plans (attached in Appendix A)

These plans highlight strategies each department has developed to provide high quality academic advising.

Overall, the College of Education and Social Services advises and retains students through close-knit, team-oriented advising. The numerous touch points beginning after our students have been admitted provides the foundation of our advising plan. Our students do not have the ability to go “name-less” and our advising structure allows for flexibility in terms of whom the students seek out for advising. The Student Services Office responds to all student-at-risk reports and the Assistant Dean for Student Administration meets with all students seeking a change of status or to withdraw from CESS/UVM due to medical reasons. Our overall goal is to provide a high quality teaching and learning experience for students. To that end, our comprehensive advising approach includes faculty academic advising during the academic year, year-around advising through the Student Services Office, and immediate response and support for students-at-risk. This plan is a work-in-progress built on the notion of critical reflection and continuous improvement.

APPENDIX A
INDIVIDUAL CESS DEPARTMENT PLANS

Department of Education (DOE)
Advising Plan

1. Guidelines for Responsibility and Workload Assignments
 - a. At all faculty annual reviews advisement evaluation data is reviewed;
 - b. Performance is evaluated through our electronic academic advisement form that students submit each semester (see attached);
 - c. Faculty also self evaluate advising performance;
 - d. Department of education across all programs established an advisement benchmark of 35 advisees for full time tenure track faculty; and
 - e. In addition all program coordinators advise as part of workloads

2. Recognize Faculty Excellence
 - a. Individual programs acknowledge exemplary faculty advisors in order to mentor Junior faculty and other faculty needing additional support; and
 - b. Faculty who teach first year courses will invite strong advisors to come into class to do an overall orientation

3. Developmentally Responsive Advisement by Class Year
 - a. Program and DOE meetings focus on effective advisement practices are discussed and coordinated;
 - b. During **First Year** all faculty advisors meet with advisees/students prior to every registration throughout the four years;
 - c. First year through each succeeding year over 4 years;
 - i. Orientation for first years in June, Conference when they arrive on campus in September, group advisement in classes
 - d. Specialty Advisors-**first year, sophomore, junior and senior years**;
 - i. Secondary Advisors for ELL, Special Ed minors
 - ii. students studying abroad, Individually designed,
 - iii. secondary education matches students with content area endorsements
 - iv. Junior and Senior Year- Career planning workshops coordinated by Career Services
 - v. Professional Licensure workshop for seniors who are seeking teacher licensure here and in other states
 - e. **Sophomore year, junior year, and senior years**- common Professional Attributes and Disposition Assessment for all students in the Department of Education;
 - f. Student Services- as new transfers enter the college this office assigns appropriate advisors in the individual programs;

- g. All advisors develop a four year academic plan with their advisees in order to guide course selection;
- h. Administrative Assistants in each of the programs create a tracking system for all advisors delineating progress of all students in the DOE.

4. Peer Mentors

- a. Junior and senior students visit first year core classes to explain programs;
- b. Third and fourth students attend Admitted Student Visit Days to share their experiences with first year students and families; and
- c. DOE students created a residence for Teacher Education Majors on campus to build a community of support and mentorship for students across their 4 years at UVM.

5. First Year Student Orientations

- a. Advisement orientations in June and beginning of first year, first semester
- b. First Year Conference in September
 - i. Student Services
 - ii. Career Services
 - iii. Dean
 - iv. Program representatives
- c. Four year career planning for all students
 - i. via Career services through university-invited to program and department meetings for coordinating and delivering career planning to all teacher education students
 - ii. Program Academic Plans

Department of Social Work Advising Plan

In responding to this inquiry about an advising plan, faculty were asked for input regarding our Department's advising, and asked them to reference UVM's Strategic Action Plan and Academic Excellence goals which focuses on career planning and effective student advising, which have been high priorities for us in Social Work (SW). Faculty were informed that Colleges and Departments were charged with developing best practices for advising, that takes into account students' individual needs.

1. Accordance with CBA and performance evaluation.

- Data about advising effectiveness is collected by the chair annually and by the faculty member, as part of RPT process and annual review.
- We need to expand multiple data points documenting student academic achievement as a result of our advising. We are now using an electronic system instead of in class paper forms, response rate for end of course evaluation had been relatively good, need to collect and analyze data about advising.
- Staff send out multiple reminders for students to schedule advising sessions and the programs considers that engagement with students for advising as part of effective teaching.

2. How do we recognize faculty and staff who excel at student advising?

- We need to develop measures for excellence in advising and recognize faculty more formally. We do include advising effectiveness data (student survey about availability of advisor, etc.) in annual reviews with goals for improving advising. Availability and student access to information and support are part of program expectations.
- The Social Work program engages in professional and academic advising in keeping with our accreditation body to include the Council of Social Work's (CSWE) definition of effective advising.
- We should recognize faculty for advising in perhaps a similar way for excellence in teaching or research

3. How do we ensure developmentally responsive advising sessions by class year (Freshman through Senior year) and respond to special needs (e.g., field practicums, academic minors, study abroad, etc)

- Faculty value connecting the student to appropriate resources or advocating on their behalf or bringing together the people who can provide the most individually designed response.
- Study abroad and international opportunities are woven into advising sessions occurring at least two times a year, but most have regular contact with students via email.

4. How do we seek to involve third or fourth year undergraduate Bachelor's SW (BSW) students as peer mentors?

- We need to revisit how we utilize mentorship specifically, but we do teach from a collaborative stance in all our classes (group work, peer consultation, etc.). The Concentration Year Master's SW (MSW) students tend to do the welcoming gathering in late August/early September for the Foundation Year MSW students.
- Many of our BSW student apply to our MSW program because in part of their connection to a cohort and to the dept. generally.
- The BSW committee plans to begin community meetings where 1-2 year students could mingle and learn from 3-4 year students. The committee discussed the possibility of advising groups that are cross year and credit bearing that would provide possibilities for mentee/mentor relationships.

Department of Leadership & Developmental Sciences Advising Plan

The faculty within the Department of Leadership and Developmental Studies (DLDS) takes seriously the expectation to provide high quality academic advising for both graduate and undergraduate UVM students. As the Provost's Office request for an Academic Advising Plan appears to reflect an interest in DLDS undergraduate advising, what follows will not include details of faculty advising practices related to their advising of master's degree and doctoral degree students in DLDS. The Human Development and Family Studies program (HDFS) is the sole undergraduate program in DLDS.

The Academic Advising Plan for undergraduates majoring in Human Development and Family Studies is guided by the following principles:

- All undergraduate majoring in HDFS or “concentrating” in HDFS are assigned to a faculty advisor who teaches within the program
- The Work Load Agreements of all faculty within the HDFS program reflect CESS expectations for effort devoted to academic advising
- All undergraduate HDFS students are to meet with their advisors at least four times during the academic year in addition to an organizational meeting for all HDFS majors at the start of their UVM studies
- At the monthly HDFS Faculty meetings, faculty participate in a “safety net” exercise to review the academic performance of their students and develop strategies for addressing “students of concern”
- All HDFS students are invited to participate in an assessment of their satisfaction with the academic advising they have received. This assessment is reviewed by the Department Chair during the faculty members' Annual Performance Review