

CAS Advising: College-Level Initiatives—AY 15

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I. Choosing UVM: CAS Recruitment Strategies and Efforts

- CAS Academic Information Sessions for high-school juniors and seniors.
- CAS Information Session for AdvoCats—student tour leaders.
- Broad participation from faculty, staff, and administrators in Fall Open Houses.
- Broad participation from faculty, staff, and administrators in Spring Student Visit Days.

II. Getting *Faculty* on the Right Course: Emphasizing the Importance of Advising

CAS Student Services orients new faculty to CAS advising expectations, provides information about degree and other requirements, and familiarizes faculty with available student-support services. These events include preparing faculty for any informational sessions for prospective, incoming, and current students in which faculty participate. (See list below.) In addition, special orientation sessions are prepared for new faculty and for faculty who participate in the Teacher-Advisor Program (TAP) for the first time.

III. Getting New Students on the Right Course: An Effective Orientation Experience

ALANA Pre-Orientation

A CAS Student Services staff member accompanies an Admissions Diversity Team staff member to UVM's four partnership schools in the Bronx, NY. (The CAS liaison also makes phone and email contact/outreach to the students at the newer partnership schools in Philadelphia and Chicago.)

June Orientation for New First-Year and New Transfer students

The two-day orientation introduces students and their parents to first-year programs, majors and minors, degree requirements, and how to register for courses. CAS personnel and faculty from **each** department and academic program lead these sessions. Particular attention is given to the integrated programs, STEM, and pre-med students. CAS personnel also attend other colleges' orientations to advise non-CAS students in registering for CAS courses.

July Summer Campus Life Sessions for New Transfer Students

This session captures those missed in June.

Review of New Students' Class Schedules

In July, CAS Student Services reviews the schedules of **ALL** new students who have registered for courses, to date, to ensure any changes students may have made since June are well informed and appropriate.

Review of Advanced Placement (AP) Credit

Student AP scores become available starting in mid-July. CAS Student Services re-reviews these students' schedules to help them avoid retaking courses for which they may have AP credit.

Individual Orientation Sessions

CAS Student Services advisors are available for individual advising sessions for students who were not able to attend the first-year or transfer student orientation sessions.

Reach-Out Calls and Late August Orientation

Those who have not been oriented and those who are enrolled in 12 credits or less are individually contacted by CAS Student Services. In addition, a final orientation session is held for any remaining transfer and first-year (mostly international) students in late August.

Winter Orientation

In January, CAS organizes an orientation session for new first-year and transfer students who will be starting classes at UVM in the spring semester.

IV. Enhancing the First-Year Experience: The Keystone to Retention

TAP (Teacher-Advisor Program)

TAP is a writing-intensive program that combines an interactive course environment with careful, attentive, and nurturing academic advising. In TAP, students enroll in the **fall semester** in a small, group seminar on a topic of common interest. The maximum class size is 19. The instructor also takes the role of an academic advisor and encourages the students to explore their interests and academic goals. TAP classes also satisfy the University's writing and literacy general requirement, and fulfill other major and distribution requirements.

CAS Student Services staff are on call to support TAP faculty and routinely visit their classes once in November prior to spring registration to go over the registration process, degree requirements, and all kinds of student-support services available in the College and the University. CAS Student Services particularly emphasizes the availability of one-on-one appointments and walk-in hours provided by our advisors.

Integrated Programs: Yearlong (Residential) TAPs

CAS also offers several yearlong, residential TAPs. Students admitted to these programs co-enroll into a block of four to six interconnected courses from different disciplines. The yearlong, common academic and residential experience creates a strong sense of intellectual community in students and teachers, as well as an appreciation for the interconnectedness of phenomena across disciplines and for the unique strength and perspective that each individual discipline contributes. Admission to these programs is by application and students can be admitted before coming to Orientation.

Based on their student selectivity and long history of success, the two oldest programs have been designated *Dean's Signature Programs*: 1) the Integrated Humanities and 2) the Integrated Social Sciences. Students can also choose from two other, less selective but equally engaging programs: 3) the Integrated Fine Arts and 4) the Integrated Study of Earth and the Environment.

V. Improving Academic and Career Planning

Freshman and Sophomore Workshops

CAS Student Services runs three workshops to encourage and facilitate the exploration of internships, academic and vocational interests, as well as to ensure students craft and do not stray from viable four-year graduation plans. Each workshop is advertised widely to first-year and sophomore students via UVM email, social media, posters, and class announcements. Workshop 1 (*Exploring, seeking and preparing for internships*) and Workshop 2 (*Selecting a major that fits your interests and skill set*) are strategically scheduled in advance of a UVM Job Fair and a UVM Majors Fair, respectively. Workshop 3 (*Charting your path to graduation*) is held on the first day of course registration.

Undeclared Majors/Changing Majors Workshops

This workshop is offered four times a year to first-year and sophomore students who have not declared a major or are considering changing their major. Students learn about the value of a liberal arts education, transferrable skills and knowledge, the CATS audit of a student's academic progress, service learning courses, and the importance of planning internships. Information about specific majors, minors, and disciplines is also provided. Students can sign up for individual follow-ups with a CAS advisor, a faculty member, and/or the Career Center.

Majors Fairs

There are two majors fairs in the fall and spring two weeks prior to when registration opens. The fairs are organized in collaboration with all the colleges, Career Services, and the Registrar's Office.

Walk-in Hours

In addition to scheduled appointments with students, CAS provides walk-in advising hours (Monday through Friday from 1:30 to 3:30pm) for students in need of immediate academic counseling.

Navigating UVM and Beyond—New CAS Courses:

Major Decisions was developed to assist undecided students to select their major. The course aims to help students 1) identify their own skills, interests, values, and goals; 2) become deeply familiarized with the majors that may be a good fit for them; and 3) choose the major that best fits them. This course is offered in both the fall and spring semesters.

Designing Your College uses a Design Thinking approach to help freshmen and sophomores make the most of their UVM experience by exploring the purpose of college, major selection, educational *way finding*, and innovating college outcomes. The class incorporates small group discussion, in-class activities, field exercises, personal reflection, and individual coaching.

Career Pathways lays the foundation for identifying and securing summer internships, which assist students in preparing for future careers. The course is offered in the spring semester.

Designing Your Life uses a Design Thinking approach to help juniors and seniors with decision-making, career navigation, and overcoming obstacles. The aims of the course are to: 1) equip students with practical ideas and tools with which they can proactively craft their post-undergraduate vocational experience, and 2) enable them to extend the usefulness of these tools far beyond the content of the course, increasing their "creative confidence" and ability to

tackle complex, open-ended problems encountered in many of today's (and tomorrow's) professions.

Design Thinking and the Art of Innovation equips students to creatively tackle “wicked” problems in the real world, and develops their “creative confidence.” The learning outcomes include enhancing the students’ ability to conduct primary research, think critically, generate ideas, work through ambiguity, manage team dynamics, incorporate feedback, and communicate effectively.

VII. Supporting Student Success in the Natural Sciences

The Science Track Project

To increase student success, incoming students majoring in Biology, Biological Science, Plant Biology, and Zoology are “block-scheduled” before June orientation. Based on students’ level of prior achievement (ACE score), we assign them to one of three science tracks to tailor academic challenge to students’ predicted ability. The goal is to offer each individual student a balanced and manageable course load in the first year:

Track 1: ACE 01-02 scores are blocked into BCOR 011

Track 2: ACE 03-04 scores are blocked into BCOR 011 and MATH 019

Track 3: ACE 05-09 scores are blocked into BCOR 011, MATH 019 and CHEM 031.

Neuroscience majors are also blocked into one of three similar tracks based on their ACE scores. The major requirements for Neuroscience students differ slightly from the requirements of Biology-related majors, but the rationale and methods remain the same.

The CHEM 031 (Pilot) Project

CHEM 031, “General Chemistry,” is a very challenging course and many of the large percentage of incoming students across the university (35.6%) who take it struggle to succeed. We are increasing the support we offer first-year students by adding to the course a required weekly recitation that is led by upperclassmen (approximately 12). The recitation leaders are selected and trained by Academic Support Programs and are supported by a graduate student who serves as liaison between them and the instructor. Adding a recitation to the course has had a substantive, favorable impact in academic success, as measured by decreased academic alerts, withdrawals, and grades of D or F. Our plan is to build capacity to offer recitation sessions to all sections of CHEM 031, as well as to extend the program to other challenging courses in Physics and Economics.

A New Effort: The AS 095 “BioFIG” (Pilot) Project

CAS, in conjunction with the School of Business Administration and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, is embarking on a pilot for incoming first-year students, called FIG (First-Year Interest Group). FIGs are residentially-based clusters of students who co-enroll in the same block of two to three courses. Grounded in the principles of persistent practice and peer collaboration, they include weekly interactive sessions with a student leader as well as other support opportunities. The goal is to create community, develop effective study skills, and promote academic success.

CAS has randomly selected 20 to 30 incoming Biology majors who have indicated a pre-med interest. These students will all be enrolled in sections of BCOR 011, CHEM 031, and MATH

019, assigned to the same faculty advisor; and co-enroll in AS 095: *BioFIG* (a 1.0 credit course that is graded on a pass/fail basis). Much like a recitation session, students will meet for 50 minutes per week with a tutor selected by Academic Support Programs. These weekly sessions will include discussions on time management, study skills, exam preparation and reflection, and visits by campus partners (e.g., UVM's Career Services, CAS Student Services, etc.).

VII. Tailoring Support to a Diverse Population

Transfer Students

Transfer students often find greater difficulty than first-time first-year students connecting with the university community at large and developing the sense of belonging. As a preventive measure, to reduce their likelihood of feeling isolated, the college invites transfer students to participate in college-organized social events, UVM-sponsored activities, and an email discussion group. Additional efforts include a special orientation for transfer students, receptions for new transfers with CAS Deans, and a follow-up, informal communication mid-semester.

International Students

A CAS Student Services staff member is assigned as the International Liaison to the Office of International Education (OIE). The CAS International Liaison supports three international student cohorts: 1) Global Gateway Program (GGP), 2) US Pathway Program (USPP), and 3) international undergraduates not affiliated with either the GGP or USPP. Our services to international students include formal academic advising, as well as support of, and participation in, many GGP- and USPP-organized events.

Advising: In advance of the International Orientation Week held before fall classes begin, Student Services staff offer individual appointments to ensure international students develop a viable schedule and register for the appropriate courses.

ALANA Student Community

CAS assigns a Student Services representative, or *ALANA Liaison*, to track the academic progress of students who come from our ALANA high school partners. The ALANA Liaison works with the ALANA Student Center staff and their advisors throughout the year to support CAS ALANA students. The ALANA Liaison hosts advising sessions at the ALANA Student Center prior to both fall and spring registration, and contacts students regularly to ensure they are connected with the appropriate support systems. Additionally, CAS Student Services annually hosts a breakfast at the ALANA Student Center. This is an opportunity to connect with students in an informal setting and make the college more approachable and accessible to ALANA students.

“Part-time” Students

CAS Student Services staff are also attentive to students who have signed up for 12 units of credit or less. Some in this group may represent students who elect to pursue their degree part-time. Others may be seniors who need 12 credits or less to graduate. Some may have had “financial holds” placed on their accounts, thus making them unable to undertake further, or in some cases even initial, course registration efforts. However, there are others in this group who do not fall into these categories and who may need extra support and advising. In April, after registration for the fall semester, these students are contacted by email and offered assistance

by CAS Student Services. A revised list is compiled in July, and students on the list are similarly contacted.

Struggling Students

Outreach to Students on Academic Probation. Students failing to achieve an overall GPA above 1.9 in any given semester are put on Academic Probation and offered individualized advising and support from CAS throughout the semester. Our advisors work in consultation and collaboration with other UVM offices, including the Dean of Students Office, Learning Coop, ALANA Student Center, Counseling and Psychiatric Services, and ACCESS, to provide adequate and individualized support services.

Outreach to Students with Multiple Academic Alerts. Several weeks before the withdrawal date for courses, CAS Student Services generates a list of students who received academic alert letters from course instructors. Whereas these alerts also go to faculty advisors for further attention, students with two or more academic alerts are individually offered assistance from CAS Student Services staff.

VIII. Keeping Students on Track for On-Time Graduation

CAS has taken a number of steps to monitor student performance and to encourage student action in order to increase on-time graduation.

Subject GPA Report

The Subject GPA Report was just developed in AY 2013-14 to create an automated process that provides early identification of undergraduates who are struggling in their major or minor. Previously, these problems would not have been detected until the senior year, when records are checked to identify who is on track to graduate. The Subject GPA Report allows us to identify students who are *in good standing* (their overall GPA > 2.0) *but not making adequate progress* in their major or minor (their major or minor GPA < 2.0). Once identified, these students are encouraged to re-evaluate their major and minor choices and forge a successful path toward graduation. (Students need a GPA > 2.0 in their major and minor to graduate.)

Monitoring Study Abroad

Under the new automated system for approving study-abroad proposals, CAS Student Services reviews each study-abroad proposal to ensure that studying abroad does not delay on-time graduation.

Monitoring and Notifying Seniors

Over the summer between the junior and senior year, CAS Student Services runs an individual CATS audit and reviews the fall enrollment schedule of every probable senior in CAS (1,000 to 1,200 students) to ensure they are making satisfactory progress toward their degree completion. We send a check sheet with detailed information on what actions each senior needs to take in order to graduate in May, from adding and changing courses to changing majors to declaring minors. This monitoring and notification continues throughout the senior year. In the early fall, the list of seniors is examined again to determine what graduation requirements still need to be fulfilled. In addition to the en masse CATS audits, senior students are reminded in both the fall and spring semesters to fill out the on-line *intent to graduate*

form. Once individual students file their intent to graduate, their academic record is audited again. At our request, students who achieve senior standing now receive a *senior graduation reminder* when they log into *myUVM*.