UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Academic Advising Plan

2018

"Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience"
(Light, 2001, p.1)

Academic Advising at the University of the Virgin Islands

Guiding Principle of Advising at UVI:

Through effective advising of students, UVI faculty and staff will further contribute to the attainment of Goal 2A in the Pathways to Greatness Strategic Plan, which states:

"UVI will produce graduates who are academically excellent, globally sensitive, entrepreneurially focused, emotionally and spiritually balanced, and committed to serving the world." -UVI's Pathways to Greatness Strategic Plan Goal 2A

Mission

The mission of academic advising at UVI is to assist students in constructing and implementing their own plan to meet educational, career, and life goals and, in so-doing, enhance the lives of graduates and the communities in which they live.

Vision

Through effective Academic Advising, UVI will be a globally recognized model of educational excellence for student success through a holistic and innovative academic environment.

UVI Philosophy of Academic Advising

Academic Advising at UVI is a student-led and student-centered process that is supported by both Faculty Advisors and CSS Advisors. All advisors will work together to: (a) assist students with developing and implementing a plan for achieving academic and career goals, (b) encourage students to achieve and maintain excellence in academia, and (c) foster an academic environment that promotes critical reflection, interactive relationships, entrepreneurial partnerships, and a hunger for lifelong learning.

Roles of Faculty Advisors and CSS Advisors/Success Specialists

*Although Faculty Advisors and CSS advisors play separate distinctive roles, collaboration between the two will be essential to providing for the holistic success of students.

*The relationship with the CSS Advisor is not intended to replace the one with the Faculty Advisor, but to provide additional holistic support/outreach, especially during the first two critical academic years.

*Addendum #1 *("Advising Structures by School")* outlines more specifically the roles of CSS Advisors and Faculty Advisors relative to each School/College/Major. In general, advising-related roles include:

- *Faculty advisor:* A member of the faculty with expertise in a field of the student's declared major. A faculty advisor is to guide the student in his/her own decision as it relates to their career and personal goals as well as academic planning to ensure timely progress to graduation. Depending on comfort level, faculty advisors may also discuss academic strategies for success.
- *CSS Advisor/Success Specialist:* Primarily work with freshmen/sophomore students to help them learn to navigate the academic processes of UVI. CSS Advisors will encourage students to establish a relationship with their faculty advisor. They may stay connected with students throughout their time at UVI to provide additional support. They will serve as a "case manager" when faculty create alerts in BucsConnect, providing outreach and pulling together other campus resources as necessary. A CSS Advisor will work with students to help them grow in their academic strategies, time management, test-taking skills, assertiveness, problem-solving, establishing priorities, etc. They may register students until they start taking "major" courses if this is as agreed upon through the College/School advising plan.
  - *CSS Advisors/Success Specialists will be assigned to work with specific schools/colleges and will attend their respective faculty meetings to stay up-to-date on pertinent curriculum developments.*
- *Advising Coordinator:* A staff member from the Center for Student Success who is also responsible for advisor training and development for both CSS and faculty advisors. This person is knowledgeable about the BucsConnect platform, serves as a continual resource for all advisors, maintains the "Advising Handbook" and coordinates the advising feedback process as described later in the Advising Plan.
- *Faculty mentor/Super-Advisor:* A faculty member within each major who serves as a mentor to other faculty advisors in that area, helping to make sure all faculty advisors are familiar with the specific requirements for their program. This individual also may have a larger advising load than other faculty.
  - *The assignment to this role will be made by each school/college*
  - *Criteria may include: extensive knowledge of programs, passion for advising, evidence of full usage of BucsConnect for advising activities as described elsewhere in the plan*
  - *Faculty may be rewarded by course reduction or other means as determined by schools*
  - *This individual will receive extra training from Advising Coordinator as needed*
- *Peer Academic Coach:* A fellow student trained to help other students navigate the university setting and their surroundings. Students that are attached to some form of a support system are more likely to succeed in college (Miller et al. 2017).

Technology and Advising

- At the time that this document is being reviewed for approval, the primary platform used for advising and noted throughout this document is referred to as "BucsConnect." This was formerly known at UVI as SSC (Student Success Collaborative) Campus and is a product purchased from the Education Advisory Board (EAB)
- In the event that UVI moves to use a different technology platform, the appropriate sections of the Advising Plan shall be updated accordingly.

Advisor Assignments and Reassignments

- Advisor assignments will be made in banner ***by or within the first week of each semester*** in collaboration between ACES, Schools/Colleges and CSS. Assignments may also be adjusted throughout each semester if necessary. The responsibility & process for making the assignments will be addressed in each College/School advising plan.
- When students graduate, Administrative Specialists of the respective colleges and schools will ensure that advising relationships in Banner are ended.
- Administrative Specialists will collaborate with ACES to ensure that students are promptly matched with a new faculty advisor any time a Faculty Advisor retires or otherwise leaves the University.
- CSS Advisors will work directly with ACES to ensure CSS advising relationships are updated for the above situations.

New Student Orientation/Registration

- All Faculty Advisors and CSS Advisors are expected to attend the registration portion of new student orientation unless other arrangements are made with their school/college/department.
  - Faculty Advisors will meet with students for registration during the arranged times.
  - CSS Advisors will be available for extra support as needed, but must also provide coverage in CSS.
- During orientation, new students will meet with Faculty Advisors (though no official advisor assignments will take place at this point) to register for their first semester.
  - This may include an academic orientation session presented by the College or School as well as some one-on-one time between students and Faculty Advisors.

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Advisor Responsibilities/Communication With Students

- Both CSS Advisors and Faculty Advisors are expected to reach out to new advisees to establish early contact and review/edit schedules during the first week if necessary (as noted above, advising relationships will be made in Banner by the end of the first week of each semester).

- Colleges/Schools *may consider* establishing early contact (between acceptance and matriculation) with potential advisees from among newly admitted students using contact information available in BucsConnect or provided by ACES.

- All advisors will be expected to reply to communication sent from students within 48 hours and to keep appointments scheduled with/by students.
  - Simply acknowledging receipt of the email may suffice as an initial response.

- Each advisor is expected to use BucsConnect to do the following each semester (can request assistance from CSS if needed):
  - Initiate communication with all advisees
  - Set up and update their "Availability" each semester
  - Send out Appointment Campaigns at least once per semester.
  - Document advising appointments

- Faculty Advisors must post office hours on their doors, as well as online, and maintain a weekly schedule for advising appointments and walk-ins during established hours.
  - Administrative Specialists will communicate faculty office hours/locations (in the event that faculty are not able to work from their normal office location) with CSS and the Registrar's Office so they can effectively refer students to Faculty Advisors.

- Faculty Advisors will work with students to ensure that they have submitted a graduation application <u>one year prior</u> to their anticipated graduation. Two semesters before graduation, Faculty Advisors will work with students to create a two semester course plan that aligns with their graduation audit.

- Schools/Colleges must ensure that all majors have an updated and accurate degree course sequence to graduation (paradigm) posted on the UVI website. All Schools/Colleges must review the information for each of its majors and update on a regular basis.

- A safety net (back up) advisement plan will be created in each school/college for instances where students may not have been able to work with their assigned Faculty Advisor but need to be working with faculty. This will be uploaded into Bucs Connect.
  - If a student has trouble reaching their faculty advisor, they will be advised to reach out to the Administrative Specialist or Dean for that school/college for assistance in reaching that faculty or referral to the backup faculty advisor.

Semester registration roles

- With due respect to the "Advising Structures by School or College" document, the Faculty Advisor relationship should be viewed as the primary resource for information regarding which classes a student should register for each semester, *especially* when the student begins taking courses for their major, or sooner as identified in the "Advising Structures…" document.
    - Note: Students can only receive their registration PIN from their Faculty Advisor
        - There may be exceptions by which a specific school/college specifically chooses to share this information with a specific individual, such as the CSS Advisor assigned to that school/college and working with a specific group of students.
- Students may not register by any way other than:
    - Receiving their PIN from their faculty advisor and registering online
    - Meeting with a CSS Advisor in the situations listed below
    - Bringing a **signed** registration form to the Registrar's Office.
- CSS Advisors may advise/register specific groups of students (using major paradigms available online):
    - Freshmen/Sophomores unless restricted by the "Advising Structures…" document
    - University Bound, Summer Bridge, Mathematics Behind the Science Program, developmental, probationary, disciplinary, or otherwise determined at-risk
    - Students who have decided to change their major and have not yet been matched up with an appropriate faculty advisor. Working with the College/School of the intended major, CSS Advisors may assist the student with registration then direct the student to the department to request an appropriate Faculty Advisor, advising the student to follow up with this new faculty advisor regarding their schedule/plan.
    - New or returning students during summer or winter sessions when Faculty Advisors are not available, or when timing or other personal issues are of concern. Because Deans are year-round administrators, CSS will work with Deans during summer or winter inter-sessions.
        - If Faculty Advisors are available on campus for advising during these break times, they will notify CSS Advisors of an availability schedule and location so they may direct students accordingly.
        - CSS Advisors must advise students to follow up with their Faculty Advisor right away, so changes can still be made if necessary.
        - CSS Advisors will document conversations with students in BucsConnect so Faculty Advisors are able to determine with whom the student met.
    - CSS Advisors may also provide assistance for students who have met with their Faculty Advisor and received their PIN but need extra assistance with registering in Banweb or troubleshooting other issues. Students will bring registration forms completed by Faculty Advisors to CSS when the student needs assistance to register online.

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Early Alert/Other Alerts/Cases

- Deans will encourage all Faculty to partner with the Center for Student Success in using the Early Alert system in BucsConnect to report on any student concerns.

- Faculty/instructors are encouraged to communicate concerns about students through the "Alerts" function in BucsConnect at any other point in the semester.

- CSS Advisors and Faculty Advisors will both be informed of any "case" created by an "alert" in BucsConnect and will receive an automatic email when this happens. CSS Advisors will reach out to every student who has an alert and act as a case manager, bringing in other resources (counseling, student life, coaches, etc.) when necessary and updating the case accordingly. Faculty Advisors are also encouraged to reach out/follow up with their advisees who have active cases and document their efforts.

Advisor Training and Development

*Structured advisor development and a specific development training plan will play a key role in ensuring student success through improved academic performance, persistence, retention, and graduation rates.

- During new faculty orientation
  - Advising Coordinator will present on the basics of advising, usage of BucsConnect and Banweb, and other resources available
  - Handouts are provided
  - Returning faculty and CSS Advisors are invited/encouraged to attend as a refresher
  - New faculty are connected with a faculty mentor in their college
    - New faculty will sit in on Orientation/Registration event (time for this must be accounted for within the new faculty orientation schedule)
- During the semester
  - Advising Coordinator attends at least one meeting per semester of each school/college to review the advising basics and usage of BucsConnect
  - Advising Coordinator will offer 1:1 training to anyone interested
  - Other electronic resources will be made available, as well as timely email messages
- End of semester
  - Advising coordinator will collaborate with the Provost's Office/Deans to offer an "Advising Institute" in conjunction with the "Faculty Institute" to be held at the end of the Spring semester.
    - All Faculty Advisors will be required to attend
    - Current topics/issues in advising can be discussed
    - Guest speakers may be invited
    - Sessions will be recorded for future reference

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- Ongoing: Advising Coordinator will determine if funding can be available for advisors to attend NACADA conferences each year and report back on what has been learned.

Advisor Feedback Process

- Feedback forms will be available so students can have the opportunity to formally share information related to their advising experience
    - Both positive as well as areas for improvement
    - Faculty, CSS Advisors, and student representatives will create this document together
    - Forms will be available in CSS, ACES, and school/college Administrative Specialist offices
        - Advising Coordinator will also work on making it available for online submission
    - Can be completed year-round, not just a once-a-year survey
    - Students will have the option to submit anonymously
    - Feedback will be shared with Faculty and Deans through Administrative Specialists
- Deans, Department Chairs, or Faculty/CSS Advisors may request "Advising Reports" from the Advising Coordinator at any time. These are generated through BucsConnect and provide a summary of advising notes made by advisors.
- Advising Coordinator will send pertinent reports on BucsConnect activity to Deans to keep them apprised of faculty usage of the platform.
    - Faculty Advisors may include records of their advising activity in their "Record of Activities (ROA)"
- Other opportunities for data collection should be explored.

Student Development & Advisee Responsibilities

- CSS Staff will present to all FDS classes each semester regarding:
    - Usage of BucsConnect to schedule appointments with tutors or advisors, communicate with instructors, and submit a 4-year plan
    - Their responsibilities as advisees
    - The differences between a CSS Advisor and a Faculty Advisor
- CSS Staff will create and distribute tutorials/videos for students, including a video-clip of the advisement process, the Advising Crosswalk, and signage across campus.
- Students are expected to work with their Faculty Advisor to submit a graduation application one year prior to their anticipated graduation.

Implementation

- Full implementation of this plan will be ready for Fall 2018, but partial implementation could be possible in Spring 2018.

References

Light, R.J. (2001). Making the most of college. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Miller, J., Benner, K., Kheibari, A., & Washington, E. (2017). Conceptualizing on-campus support programs for collegiate foster youth and alumni: A plan for action. Children & Youth Services Review, 8357-67. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.10.028