

Report for the Undergraduate Academic Advising Committee [UAAC] May 5, 2016

In our third year of existence, we have focused on determining how to best accomplish our list of goals. To that end, we are divided into three separate but related subcommittees. We then meet as a larger body about once a month to share where we are in each subcommittee's process and to determine what we need to do as a full committee.

Below is the current status of each subcommittee's work:

ADVISOR SUPPORT AND TRAINING subcommittee

This subcommittee is working on a voluntary Sakai-based training program for faculty advisors. Approximately 5 modules with 15 separate topics have been added this year, and the group is currently creating assessment tools for each module in the training sequence. Members of this subcommittee have tested the site and improved its design over the year as a result of their experiences with it. With a new version of Sakai coming this fall, the site will be completed within this new framework.

Four faculty members have completed the online advisor training program, and have received letters of completion sent to the provost, their deans and department chairs. \$500 scholarships were also given to students in their names (courtesy of Dean Libutti); this is intended to be the incentive for more faculty to choose to complete the program in the next academic year.

All UCAS professional and faculty advisors, and all non-UCAS advisors by request, are being placed into the Sakai site this semester so that they can utilize the resources even if they are not participating in the full program. The plan is to create a beta test group for this training site in the near future.

WORKLOAD subcommittee

The goal of this subcommittee is to focus its efforts on equitable and excellent provision of advisement in all forms throughout the undergraduate experience, whether that advising comes from faculty advisors, professional advisors or a hybrid model. In order to best determine the needs of the university community, the subcommittee has been working on designing a survey to obtain information on the current status of advising across colleges.

This group—along with the **MODELS AND PRACTICES subcommittee**--has finalized a combined survey for full launch at the end of the spring, 2016 semester. This survey is being distributed to department chairs and deans in order to better understand the current advising models in use and what resources might be needed in order to provide better advising.

Over the summer and fall of 2016, the UAAC will be able to gather, collate and analyze the results of this survey. Our intent is to make a brief presentation to the Faculty Senate in fall, 2016 with the preliminary results of this survey.

Undergraduate Academic Advising Committee

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Mary Cloud
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Penny Steen
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Dean Libutti, Provost's Representative
Jayne Richmond, Dean, University College
Tammy Vargas Warner, ASFCCE Representative
Nancy Kelly, HSS ex officio
Maggie Oliver, Student Senate
James Coccozza, Student Senate

4.30 The Undergraduate Academic Advising Committee (UAAC) shall be responsible for coordinating advisor training to develop and improve university-wide advisement, ensuring that all academic advisors are informed and trained in best practices in advising, as well as in the university's academic requirements. The Committee shall also facilitate assessment of university-wide advising and make policy recommendations to the Faculty Senate on matters pertaining to the University College for Academic Success, such as admissions policy, length of time to be spent in the college, advanced standing, transfer students, advisement and counseling.

Statement from Jayne Richmond, Dean, University College for Academic Success

Professional Advisors in University College for Academic Success

A university-wide committee on academic advising was convened in Spring 2011 at the request of the Provost's Office. This committee included representatives from each of the degree granting colleges, UCAS, Enrollment Services, CCE, IEP, and Student Affairs, and was charged with designing a comprehensive plan for improving academic advising for all undergraduate students at URI. The report from this committee was presented to the Faculty Senate in 2012, and included recommendations for improvements for many aspects of advising practices, including but not limited to advisor/advisee communications, presentation of major curriculum materials, departmental advising websites, and advisor training, recognition and reward structures. The Faculty Senate accepted this report and subsequently created the "Undergraduate Academic Advising Committee" (UAAC) in May of 2013, charging it with coordination of advisor training and assessment of university-wide advising policies and practices.

One of the recommendations of the 2012 report was to create a hybrid model of advisement in University College that combines full-time professional advisors with part-time faculty advisors. This model would enable student advising needs to be met throughout the day, and throughout the year. Professional advisors would be mapped to first and second year students for specific majors, and would provide proactive outreach to students experiencing the full range of challenges, whether that be academic probation, changing majors, inability to matriculate into desired majors, and so forth. Professional advisors would also address advising issues such as financial aid SAP requirements, managing holds, tracking seat management needs and helping to improve the drop/add process. They would also work with the colleges through such activities as serving on scholastic standing committees and conducting programs in the living learning communities. The Colleges of Business and Engineering have used professional advisors in UCAS for a few years now, both with considerable success in student and faculty satisfaction, improved retention and on-time graduation.

As important as the work with students, professional advisors will support the work of faculty advisors, who will continue to play a vital role in helping students with the full range of education and career planning. The hybrid model enables faculty advisors to have the time to work with students in a mentor relationship, helping them to find success in the major, from admission through graduation and employment. The Council of Deans expressed full support for this hybrid model in UCAS, in which faculty advisors would be assigned to UCAS based on individual College needs and preferences. In July 2015 the President's Strategic Budget and Planning Council voted unanimously to authorize the creation of 10 professional advisor positions in University College for Academic Success. Each Dean has been asked to indicate which faculty and for what time commitments they will be in UCAS working with their respective majors.

Fall 2016 is also when URI is implementing a comprehensive advising technology system called “Starfish” that both faculty and professional advisors will use to manage student interventions, maintain student contact records, provide efficient appointment scheduling, and manage referrals for everything from supplemental instruction to career advising. This technology will help students and faculty to best utilize the resources at URI that support student success, both in and out of the classroom. Given these initiatives, the goals of the Strategic Academic Plan “to ensure academic quality and value,” “to prepare students for a changing world” and “to improve institutional effectiveness” are addressed. We hope to enhance students’ ability to move effectively and efficiently through the curriculum, increasing their achievement of learning goals, positively impacting their use of advising, and improving the quality of the advising experience itself. Implementing this systemic approach to advising will enable us to better serve our students, our faculty, and our university.