Recommendations for enhancing campus advising

I. Options using our current advising structure as a starting point

Low cost, shorter timeframe recommendations:

- All first and second year students should be assigned a specific advisor in Banner by fall 2015. UAC students are already assigned to a specific advisor- this has been the practice for 10+ years. With the advent of Academic Planner many other departments have adopted the practice. Departments who have not cite staff and/or faculty limitations as the most common barriers.

- Create effective tools for communicating the elements of a liberal education to new students. First start is the new GER webpage.
  - Working within New Student Orientation programming, improve communication of graduation requirements, academic expectations, and academic and other campus resources.

Low cost, longer timeframe recommendations:

- Create accountability and clear goals for all professional advisors. Provost assigns policy-making responsibility for campus advising to OSS Executive Director to enable all contract and classified staff professional advisors to follow common standards and assessment practices, drawing from the CAS Standards for Advising and the UM Advising Manual. Currently no mechanism for recognizing or rewarding “good” advising beyond one annual award for staff, one for faculty
  - Clearly articulated expectations of advisors
    - Examples of potential policy recommendations:
      - All students must declare a primary major by the 45th earned credit.
      - All first-year students, and sophomores, juniors, and seniors on academic probation or suspension, must submit advisor-approved graduation plans by the end of the first year of study (end of semester on probation or first semester returning after suspension for non-first-year students). Follow Four Bear and Veteran Degree Plan Initiative models.

- Create more sensitive advising alerts. Specifically:
  - Students who earn below 2.0 semester GPA for three consecutive semesters or fail/withdraw twice from a major sentinel course must change major, meet with professional advisor, and utilize tutoring. Campus advisors refer students in this situation to UAC Transition Advisor as necessary. This would allow students one semester to improve in major
coursework after being academically suspended following the second semester with below 2.0 GPA.
- Students who withdraw from two or more semesters trigger alert.
- Create a “warning” academic standing for students with below 2.0 semester GPA’s, but with cumulative GPA’s above 2.0.

- Install Griz Card readers on classrooms. Utilize data in Hobson's Early Alert system. Determine threshold number of absences to trigger alert. Professional advisors proactively contact and work with students who trigger an attendance alert.
  - Start with pilot of 5 large lecture hall classrooms and look for other alternatives for smaller classrooms to limit expense (e.g. clickers)
  - Also use Griz Card readers to track students’ utilization of tutoring. Students on academic probation must utilize tutoring where available.

- Behavioral Health Options holds trigger similar alert and require students to meet with a professional advisor.

- Give students receiving financial aid information on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) guidelines when they drop courses. Registration Counter staff distributes information at the time they process course drops. Encourage advisors to ask relevant diagnostic questions before signing off on drop forms.

- Encourage faculty to mentor upper-division students. Establish reward or compensation structure for faculty advising first-year students, especially in professional programs (e.g. release time, extra compensation, and/or consideration in tenure and promotion process).
  - Look strategically for a faculty member who can coordinate advising for the department (e.g. Dan Doyle in Sociology).
  - Ensure this proposed structure has formal recognition, possibly through Faculty Development Office?
  - Discuss this idea with Dave Shively, President of UFA, for potentially changing CBA language?

Moderate cost recommendations (timeframe for implementation depends on allocated resources):

- Create five new professional advisor positions and realign certain related academic programs into advising groups (listed according to priority and feasibility).
  - International Student Advisor (highest priority). This position would report to the OSS Executive Director and would advise all degree seeking international students outside
UAC advising populations. This position would also coordinate advising for international exchange students outside the Brazilian Science and Mobility Program. The recent increase in enrollment of degree seeking international students merits conversations about how we can best meet the specialized needs of this population.

- Look into UM Foundation money that isn’t earmarked for possible funding source.

- UAC Transitions Advisor (high priority). This position would report to the UAC Director, would advise all provisionally admitted students and undeclared transfers. This position would also be the first advising contact for all students who change their major during the first year of study and for those with the previously described advising holds.

- One new Social Sciences advising position within the College of Humanities and Sciences. This position would report to the Director of CHS Advising and would advise most first year students in the following majors: Anthropology, Communication Studies (including Pre-Communication Studies), Geography, MCLL, Political Science, Psychology (including Pre-Psychology), Sociology.

- One additional position for an area of identified advising need to be determined. Some possibilities could include: a second Social Sciences advising position within CHS; a position within College of Visual and Performing Arts to meet with Media Arts majors; a position within PJW College of Education and Human Sciences to meet with Communicative Sciences and Disorders and Health and Human Performance majors.

- University 101 Program Coordinator. This position would report to the OSS Executive Director and would oversee the development and implementation of a University 101 student transition course required for all first-semester new students. This two-credit course would end before finals week. This position would teach multiple sections and would also oversee the Study Jam tutoring program.

  - Professional advisors, Student Affairs professionals, Residence Life Area Coordinators, Library Faculty, and other faculty could teach sections of the course. Use teaching sections of University 101 to incentive exemplary advising across campus.

  - Courses would incorporate PETSA, Alcohol Edu, and Transit modules as assignments.

  - Courses would introduce students to campus resources and support services.
• Recommend creating an instructor stipend pool to compensate section instructors.

• Courses would incorporate basic study skills content from current C&I 160 courses - Learning Strategies for Higher Education.
  
  • Since C&I 160 course content would be incorporated into University 101, current budget allocated for non-TRiO SSS sections of C&I 160 could contribute to instructor stipends ($5,106 annually).

• Pilot the program for fall 2015 excluding all GLI, DHC, NCAA, and TRiO SSS students?

II. Alternative strategies that would require a shift in our current advising structure:

UM currently uses a “decentralized” model of advising in which students are advised through their major department. Concerns have been raised regarding the consistency and accuracy of advising across campus, particularly as it pertains to General Education Requirements. Exploration of a “distributed” model of advising is warranted.

  o Create a “General and Transitions Advising Office” within the Office for Student Success. Every student would have an assigned advisor from the Advising Office in addition to a major advisor. The focus of the General Advisor would be successful academic transition and developing graduation plans.

  o Colleges utilizing a professional advisor/faculty mentor model (e.g., Education and Forestry) would partner with the G/T Advising Office to develop and follow consistent advisor training, assessment and documentation practices.

  o The first step is to broaden conversations to include units that follow an advising model that is working well for the students in that unit. For example, the College of Forestry and Conservation uses professional advisors for lower-division students and transitions students to faculty mentorship at the upper-division level. Find opportunities to replicate these models to increase service to students, efficiency and cross-campus consistency.

  o Solicit student input regarding the highs and lows of advising on campus. Specifically, what units or departments do students perceive as the best and worst? What qualities are the students most concerned with in respect to advising?

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