

Higher Learning Commission
Self-Study Questionnaire/Report for Non-Instructional Units

Non-Instructional Unit: Academic Advising & Exploration Center (AAEC)

Individual(s) Completing the Questionnaire/Report: Dr. Bruce Bukowski

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Describe in a paragraph or two what your unit does (i.e., the services it provides).
The Academic Advising & Exploration Center provides intrusive and developmental academic advising for Undeclared and First-Year students. These students are required to meet with an assigned advisor two times each semester. The advisors help the students to understand the academic and administrative processes of the university and the nature of its academic programs. Additionally, they provide information regarding academic policies and procedures, assist in developing short-term/long-term academic planning, and provide referrals to the various specialized campus services.
2. Who is/are the constituency/ies you serve, and approximately how many of each constituency do you serve annually? (e.g., students, academic departments, classified staff, etc.)
 - Students with fewer than 24 units and all undeclared students are assigned advisors in our Center (exception: 1st year Art, Music, and Theatre majors are advised by a faculty advisor in their department)
 - Approximately, 2,100 students are assigned an advisor in our Center. The entire campus population (part-time, non-traditional, international, disabled, minority, etc) is served by our Center
 - On average, over 7,300 contacts are made each semester with our clientele (via appointments, phone calls, emails, and walk-ins)
 - An average of 500 referrals are made each semester to other campus departments and resources
 - Five hundred non-clientele also seek our services each semester
3. Overview and evaluate the adequacy of the human, physical, and fiscal resources your department deploys to serve students and meet other programmatic needs by answering the questions below:

Human Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the human resources (i.e., the # of employees (including student help) and their skills) relative to the unit's ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between "1" (completely inadequate) to "9" (completely satisfies needs).

8 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

Currently, we have 8 full-time advisors. With the number of advisors employed and the skills they possess, we are able to meet the needs and expectations of students. Our program has a

99% student satisfaction based on student evaluations. Advisor to student ratio is 1 to 275 students. Since advisors need to meet with each student twice a semester, we are at the maximum number of students/advisor.

Physical Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the physical resources (e.g., office and storage space, supporting technology, other equipment) allocated to the unit relative to the unit's ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between "1" (completely inadequate) to "9" (completely satisfies needs).

7 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

The physical space for individual advising is adequate. Space may be limited as we expand our services to incorporate exploration and the master advisors.

Fiscal Resources

While recognizing that every unit would benefit from a larger budget, evaluate the general adequacy of fiscal resources allocated to the unit to serve its constituencies and achieve other programmatic goals by assigning a number between "1" (completely inadequate) to "9" (completely satisfies needs).

8 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

We are currently able to provide all services in our programs with the current budget. Fiscal resources may be limited as we expand services for exploration.

4. In a paragraph or two, overview significant changes made in your unit since 1996 (i.e., the last North Central Association Accreditation Visit). (e.g., re-organized, key staff changes, change in purposes, etc.) The advising network at UW-Whitewater is comprised of the Academic Advising & Exploration Center for freshmen and undeclared students, college and departmental faculty advising within the four College units for upper division students, and advising provided by special programs such as Student Retention Services (EOP TRIO), Latino Student Programs, and Minority Business/Teacher Prep Program. In support of the University's special mission for disabled students, the Center for Students with Disabilities and Project Assist (learning disabled) also provide supportive advising.

Three central changes have enhanced academic advising since 2001. First, in the Fall of 2001 an Advising Council was initiated to improve communication among advising areas and academic resources, and to work on initiatives to improve advising. In addition to ongoing communication, the Advising Council has developed and published a working definition of advising, has initiated an assessment plan based on learning outcomes, and is currently working to create better web access to advising services.

Second, in the Spring 2002, the UW Whitewater Student Government Association voted to include a tuition enhancement of \$100 per student to be used for advising. This has resulted in several new programs aimed at improving freshman retention and enhancing advising in general. One new component was the opening of the Academic Advising & Exploration Center to serve all freshmen and undeclared students. This unit was staffed and trained in Fall 2002, began partial advising in Spring 2003, and took on its full advising load in Fall of 2003. Another component funded by the tuition enhancement is the "University Master Advisors."

This group is comprised of 28 faculty members distributed among the 4 colleges. The University Master Advisors receive stipends to advise Freshmen during the summer registration programs, to teach one section of the “New Student Seminar,” and to assist with the Early Warning Program. One additional component is the creation of a Peer Mentor program. Each Peer Mentor is assigned a group of new freshmen to work with at Preview, during orientation week and throughout the semester.

Associated with these programs is the evolution of a freshman seminar course from a non-degree credit University Life course to a full fledged New Student Seminar which in Fall 2001 was granted credit within the General Education Program. With the assistance of the University Master advisor program, the sections of this class grew from 12 in Fall 2001 to 36 in the Fall of 2002. In the Fall 2003 this number rose to 45. This course helps students gain the skills for success in the college environment.

In another paragraph or two, describe why these changes occurred.
See above paragraphs within this question for description of why changes occurred.

MISSION & PLANNING

5. In a paragraph or two, describing any significant projects/initiatives that your unit is planning or currently has underway, but has not yet completed.
The office is developing an "Exploration" component to advising which includes researching assessments, websites, and using ACT information. Our unit is currently transitioning from paper to online surveys to evaluate advisors. In addition, we are utilizing the new PeopleSoft Advising Application process to keep data on students instead of using paper files. In Spring 2005, we will assess the learning outcomes that the office has established. Another goal is to improve the transition of students from the Advising Center to college offices.
6. Below are five “core values” the University identifies as central to its purposes and operation. Please evaluate the importance of each core value in terms of how each aligns with the purposes of your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the five values, with those values that align more closely to the purposes of your unit receiving more points).

Core Value	Importance (100 points)
Commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding	20
Development of the individual	20
Personal and professional integrity	20
Commitment to serve	30
Commitment to develop a sense of community, respect for diversity, and global perspectives	10
Total=	100 points

7. Each and every academic and non-academic unit engages in planning for the future. Review the list of variables below and evaluate the extent to which each of the following influences decision-making behind the planning process for your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the planning variables listed below, with those variables playing the larger role in your unit’s planning efforts receiving more points)

Planning Variables	Importance (100 points)
The mission of the university or the unit	13
Academic assessment data/information relevant to student performance against learning outcomes	18
Other data/information gathered relevant to performance (e.g., Audit & Review feedback)	18
Societal/Cultural trends (e.g., changes in demographics, lifestyles, professions)	7
Campus trends (e.g., changes in university-initiated needs and demands)	15

Technology trends (e.g., technology developments that affect delivery of service)	13
Professional trends (e.g., changes evident at other universities/colleges)	7
Available human resources (e.g., # of employees, talents, etc.) within the unit	3
Available financial resources (e.g., budget, available and accessible \$)	3
Available physical resources (e.g., space, existing technology, etc.)	3
Other:	
Total=	100 points

8. Does your unit have a mission statement?
 Yes No

If you answered "yes," please list the mission statement here. or, if your mission statement can be accessed on the web, please list the URL here.

The Academic Advising & Exploration Center (AAEC) provides intrusive and developmental academic advising to assist Undeclared and First-Year students with their transition to college and their development of an educational plan consistent with their personal values, interests and abilities.

If you answered "yes," please describe how, if at all, this mission statement plays a role in your unit's planning and/or decision-making.

- Hire and retain a high quality, professional staff committed to student learning and development
- Develop innovative approaches to academic advising that foster the learning and development of our diverse student population
- Create learning environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of students
- Strive for excellence by continually assessing advising outcomes and staff performance
- Seek to improve policies, procedures and practices that impact the quality of academic advising university wide
- Communicate effectively and establish collaborative relationships with the University community
- Serve as a resource and leader to the University community on issues related to academic advising

OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE

9. What are the major or measurable objectives of the unit?
 The units major objectives are to: help students understand the academic and administrative processes of the university, provide information regarding academic policies and procedures, assist in developing short-term/long-term academic planning, and provide referrals to the various specialized campus services.
10. What outcome measures (i.e., data, information) provide evidence that your unit's objectives are being met?
 Measurements such as the number of students served, the number of referrals made, etc determine whether the outcomes have been met. (see Attachment B)
11. Related to question #10, does the unit regularly collect data/information to evaluate how effectively it serves its constituency(ies)? (This might include surveys of constituencies.)
 Yes No

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

- See Attachment A and B
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12. In a paragraph or two, describe specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in the preceding questions. Please be specific.

Over the past two years, each semester we have collected data on the number of students served, along with student satisfaction of the program. This data led to an increase in the number of students/type of clientele served by the center and the creation of 2 full-time advisor positions.

13. Please provide a list of services, if any, that your unit provides for constituencies that are external to the university.

- N/A
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14. Please list any partnerships your unit has developed with the community (external to the campus, at the local, national, or global-level).

- N/A
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STUDENT LEARNING (COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOUR UNIT HAS AS PART OF ITS MISSION OR PURPOSES THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS)

15. If your unit serves students as its primary constituency, does the unit have learning or development-related objectives relevant to its work with students? That is, does your unit expect that students will acquire certain knowledge or skill sets as a direct result of working with your unit or its programming?

Yes No

If "yes," please list these outcomes/objectives.

- Students will:
 1. Clearly understand the purpose and format of the Advising Report.
 2. Understand the General Education Requirements
 3. Be aware of the stages and locations of Advising at UW-Whitewater.
 4. Understand individual college admission requirements and
 5. Utilize WINS as a resource for academic advising and registration

16. Does the unit use data/information to evaluate the extent to which these learning or development-related objectives are, or are not being met?

Yes

No x (learning objectives were recently established)

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

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17. What specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in question #15? Please be specific.

Data will be collected in Spring 2005. Focus groups will formulate to analyze and evaluate these outcomes.

SELF-EVALUATION

Strengths

18. List and prioritize no more than three primary strengths that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these strengths, you may wish to consider: What does your unit do very well? What good things do people say about your unit? How has your unit aided the campus in meeting its mission? In what ways has your unit "gone beyond the call of duty?"

After identifying each strength, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

1. Specific Strength: Student satisfaction with advising
 - Supporting Evidence: See Attachment A
2. Specific Strength: Aided campus in meeting its mission by increasing first year retention rates to 80%(2003-2004) which will increase graduation rates in the upcoming years
 - Supporting Evidence: Received an "A" in Chancellor's 2004 Report Card, Goal #4
3. Specific Strength: Connected to University support services
 - Supporting Evidence: Each advisor in the unit is assigned liaison duties. A liaison is assigned to each of the 4 colleges as well as over 13 departments (see Attachment C).

Concerns

19. List and prioritize no more than three primary concerns that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these concerns, you may wish to consider: What could be improved? What is done poorly? What do we, as a unit, avoid doing, even though we know it's important?

After identifying each concern, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

Finally, identify one or more recommended actions to address the area of concern. This may include actions that your unit has already begun, actions being planned, or preliminary thinking about how to address the area of concern.

1. Specific Concern: Transition of students from 1st year advising to 2nd year advising
 - Supporting Evidence: Campus Perception
 - Recommended Actions: The Advising Council is in the process of creating a 2 year survey to measure advising outcomes campus-wide.

2. Specific Concern: The initial charge of the university plan for the Academic Advising & Exploration Center, in addition to advising, included exploration of majors and careers.
 - Supporting Evidence: No measurable outcomes for Exploration
 - Recommended Actions: Continue to work on Exploration Plan with decisions being implemented in Fall 2005

3. Specific Concern:
 - Supporting Evidence:
 - Recommended Actions: