

University of Northern Iowa
Undergraduate Advising Council to the Provost
Recommendations for 2009-10 Actions for Improvement of Academic Advising

Since the President's Taskforce on Educational and Student Services in Fall 2006, several foundational actions have been taken to address the reorganization of academic advising at UNI. The Advising Council appreciates the leadership of the Provost in initiating the actions named below to improve advising services to students:

- The formation of the Advising Implementation Team to make recommendations on the reorganization of advising (April 2007)
- The 2007 NACADA Consultants' visit and their subsequent report
- The formation of the University Advising Mission Vision Goals Taskforce which developed formal mission and vision statements for advising, published in the 2008-10 University catalog, and also developed goals and outcomes for academic advising at UNI.
- The formation of the UNI Undergraduate Advising Council to the Provost in December of 2007
- Implementation of an advising intake model for freshmen (Fall 2008)

Since its formation, the Council has conducted a thorough examination and study of the NACADA Consultants' report, the goals and outcomes developed by the Advising Mission Vision and Goals Taskforce, and a Student Survey of the Importance Students Placed on Advising Activities. In order to determine how the Council could best serve the University advising community, it decided to administer an additional survey of campus faculty and staff advisors to assess advisor needs and attitudes toward advising. This letter reports the preliminary work of the Advising Council and makes the following four recommendations for continuous improvement regarding academic advising at UNI. These recommendations are driven by data from the advising reports and the surveys listed above.

1. Advisor Load

The Advising Council recommends that financial support be allocated to colleges to address advisor /advisee loads and bring them in line with national recommendations. (Faculty 30:1 and staff advisors 300:1)

Data Source	NACADA recommendation and UNI rationale and survey data
NACADA Report #8	That colleges and schools make available as appropriate the human and financial resources necessary to decrease the student to advisor ratios.
Advisor Survey # 5	25% of faculty have over the recommended 30:1 advisees per full time teaching load. 21.5% of staff advisors have above the recommended 300:1 ratio.
Advisor Survey # 10	20% of faculty report meeting the advising needs of students with difficulty or feel they have too many advisees. 42.9% of staff advisors either meet the advising needs of students with difficulty or feel they have too many advisees.

Advisor Survey # 16	25.8% of faculty report being too busy to participate in faculty training.
Student Survey	88% of students report that it is highly important or important that their advisor is available for face-to-face meetings

2. Professional Development for Faculty/Staff Advisors

The Advising Council recommends that it be tasked with implementing ongoing professional development programs for university advisors and that appropriate support be provided for this.

Data Source	NACADA recommendations and UNI rationale and survey data
NACADA # 6	That a council advisory to the Provost be formed, comprised of all relevant stakeholders and charged with reviewing and assessing advising services, as well as serving as the body to promote the professional development, evaluation, and reward and recognition of both professional and faculty advisors (e.g. UNI ACADA)
NACADA # 16	That UNI establish an on-going, systematic professional development program that targets both new and seasoned faculty and professional advisors
NACADA #18	That UNI institute a university-wide, on-going faculty, professional advisor, and advising program review process.
NACADA #19	That UNI develop a recognition and reward program for excellence in advising.
Advisor Survey #16	25.3% of faculty are not aware of any advisor training opportunities. 25% of faculty and 50% of staff advisors have participated in new advisor training sessions sponsored by Academic Advising and found them helpful.
Advisor Survey #17	65.8% of faculty and 78.6% of staff advisors would find an initial and or follow-up advisor training session helpful in keeping up-to-date on advising issues at UNI.
Advising Mission/ Vision/Goals Taskforce	Goal # 1 - Promote a culture of quality academic advising through advisor education, recognition and reward, and advising program assessment.
Advising Mission/ Vision/Goals Taskforce	Goal # 3 - Ensure that all students have access to knowledgeable and respectful advisors.
Advising Mission/ Vision/Goals Taskforce	Goal # 4 - Provide accurate information about university requirements, policies and procedures.
Student Survey	83% of students report that it is highly important or important that advisors evaluate their progress toward graduation
Student Survey	82.5% of students report that it is highly important or important that advisors know Liberal Arts Core requirements

3. A Campus Advising Network

The Advising Council recommends that a network of campus advisors which meets regularly to enhance communication, promote advisor development, and share best practices be formed.

Data Source	NACADA recommendation and UNI rationale and survey data
NACADA # 6	That a council advisory to the Provost be formed, comprised of all relevant stakeholders and charged with reviewing and assessing advising services, as well as serving as the body to promote the professional development, evaluation, and reward and recognition of both professional and faculty advisors (e.g. UNI ACADA)
Advisor Survey #17	16.3% of faculty advisors and 78.6% of staff advisors would find an ongoing network of campus advisor that meets regularly helpful.
Advising Mission/Vision/Goals Taskforce	Goal # 1 - Promote a culture of quality academic advising through advisor education, recognition and reward, and advising program assessment.
Advising Mission/Vision/Goals Taskforce	Goal # 3 - Ensure that all students have access to knowledgeable and respectful advisors.
Advising Mission/Vision/Goals Taskforce	Goal # 4 - Provide accurate information about university requirements, policies and procedures.
Student Survey	85.5% of students report that it is highly important or important that advisors are able to refer them to qualified persons or appropriate offices to answer their questions or meet their needs

4. A Web-based Advisor Handbook

The Advising Council recommends that it be charged with creating a web-based Advisor Handbook.

Data Source	NACADA recommendation and UNI rationale and survey data
NACADA #17	That UNI develop a web-based “Advising Handbook” for use by both new and seasoned faculty and professional advisors.
Advisor Survey # 17	58.4% of faculty and 57.1% of staff advisors would find a web-based advisor handbook helpful.
Advising Mission/Vision/Goals Taskforce	Goal # 1 - Promote a culture of quality academic advising through advisor education, recognition and reward, and advising program assessment.
Advising Mission/Vision/Goals Taskforce	Goal # 3 - Ensure that all students have access to knowledgeable and respectful advisors.
Advising Mission/Vision/Goals	Goal # 4 - Provide accurate information about university

Taskforce	requirements, policies and procedures.
Student Survey	81.7% of students report that it is highly important or important that advisors are a good source of advice for college and university procedures (e.g. add/drop, waivers/substitutions, etc.)

The University Undergraduate Advising Council to the Provost

Dr. Douglas Mupasiri, Chair
 Dr. Shoshanna Coon, College of Natural Sciences
 Linda Corbin, College of Business Administration
 Dr. Michael Gasser, College of Social & Behavioral Science
 Michelle Holland, College of Education
 Inez Murtha, Academic Learning Center
 Jean Neibauer, Academic Advising
 Dr. Alan Schmitz, College of Humanities & Fine Arts
 Jennifer Sell, Athletic Academic Advisor
 Kristin Woods, Coordinator of New Student Programs

Report Sources:

2008 Advisor Survey, Faculty and Staff Advisor Responses
 2007 Student Survey of the Importance Students Placed on Advising Activities
 2007 NACADA Consultant's Report
 2007 Advising Mission Vision and Goals Taskforce Report