

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

Advising Plan Implementation Update

An update of the new HSU advising model since fall 2014

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Introduction

This update provides a brief overview of the process involved in implementing the 2014 Advising Working Group's recommendations, with specific focus on the new advising model. In late spring, the Advising Working Group recommended several initiatives to improve advising with the ultimate goals of increasing retention, reducing the achievement gap, reducing time to graduation and increasing graduation rates. The Working Group prioritized the transition to professional advisors using developmental academic advising for all first and second year students, beginning fall 2014. This plan was circulated throughout Academic Affairs and feedback was solicited.

Although this transition to a new advising model was a collaborative effort, this update mainly focuses on the changes in the Academic and Career Advising Center (ACAC) as the primary transformative effort. These efforts have yielded numerous successes:

- Advising has been broadly integrated into university-wide initiatives and student success, it is a core part of the new strategic plan
- Increased communication and integration with academic departments
 - Professional advisors housed in departments
- Communication plan for proactive outreach to students
- Expanded advising caseloads for professional staff
- New program for supporting students on academic probation
- Coordinated and consistent training among professional advisors
- Strengthened coordination between student services programs supporting first and second year students

Phase One of the New HSU Advising Model

Phase One represented the first stage in implementing the new HSU advising model and was comprised of 765 Fall 2014 First Time Freshmen (FTF) students from one to four majors in each college, with 838 FTF added in Fall 2015. The students in these majors were assigned to advisors from EOP, ACAC, and INRSEP.

The Phase One implementation was a complicated and complex process that involved numerous people and decisions regarding logistics, communication, training, technology, and assessment.

- Phase One majors are Biological Sciences, Criminology and Justice Studies, Environmental Management & Protection Environmental Science, Psychology, Sociology, Undeclared, and Wildlife.
- All first and second year EOP students and all athletes were included, regardless of major.
 - In terms of advisor assignments, EOP trumped the major and athletes; and athletes trumped the major.
- Students transition to faculty after the 2nd year, regardless of units completed.
- For Phase One students, the advisor changed if the student changed their major.
- Advisors staff satellite offices in departments

ACAC Usage

Usage of the ACAC advising services increased dramatically since implementing Phase One. In AY 2014-15, the number of academic advising visits to ACAC more than tripled from the previous years. The Advising Working Group recommended that students see their advisor at least once a semester and the data show that students are indeed meeting with their advisor at least once, with **82% of them seeing their advisor more than once a semester.**

Holistic Approach

ACAC revised our student learning outcomes and modified practices to address them. Prior to the first appointment, each student completes a personal interest sheet, which was created out of an Appreciative Inquiry approach and follows a model for Personalization in Academic Advising. This sheet provides the professional advisor with information about students' interests, values and aspirations, which facilitates trust and strong relationship development.

Once students have completed a semester at HSU, they are given a self-assessment as part of a guided exercise in their development as a successful college student and future professional. They are encouraged to reflect on their goals for coming to HSU, their career aspirations once they graduate, and to reflect on what they have learned about their academic strengths and abilities during this time. The advisors use these assessments to:

- Help students determine if their goals remain the same as when they started,
- Create academic plans for the next few semesters if the goals are unchanged, or
- Guide them through exploring other majors if the goals have changed
- Strategize with the students regarding internships, volunteer experiences, interactions with clubs and student and/or professional organizations that bolster students' connections with their academic departments and develops their transferrable professional skills.
- Create success plans that build on students' academic capabilities.

Staffing

To implement Phase One, no additional staff were hired. Instead, ACAC staff changed their business processes, practices and caseloads. The caseload for each ACAC advisor more than doubled and each advisor now has between 200 and 300 students (except for the Associate Director, who has a caseload of approximately 100 students), while still providing general advising to the institution. EOP changed their advising structure to fit the new advising model and assigned students by major. Lonyx Landry in INRSEP was given a caseload of students in Biology consistent with the mission of INRSEP. However, in order to move to Phase Two and take on advising for the entire first and second year students, additional advisors will be necessary.

Department Interaction

One of the concerns raised by faculty in the initial vetting process regarded level of interaction and integration with the departments. Therefore, to the extent possible, ACAC advisors maintained a satellite office in the major departments with the goal of fostering integration into the department. The Director of Undergraduate Advising met with the department chairs new to professional advising several

times throughout the first year. A “department intake” sheet solicited information and strategies from the department chairs which were shared with the advisors working with their students. Additionally, feedback sessions were held to ensure that if there were concerns, they were being addressed.

In addition to the structural discussions, advisors were invited to department meetings, introduced to students at HOP, regularly interacted with faculty, added to department listservs, invited to department gatherings. They tried to maintain regular office hours. As of fall 2015, 3 advisors are housed full-time in departments and one more splits her time between ACAC and the satellite office. All majors served by Phase One have an advisor working in the department.

Advisor Training

Previously, in the Advising Center, there was not a formalized advisor training program. Now, there is a formalized training program with a training guide for all professional advisors. Training topics include: an overview of best practices and philosophy of advising, student development theory, cultural competence, diverse student needs, connecting with campus resources, and connecting academics with career. All advisors are trained as undeclared advisors, with specialization in their major field.

Academic Probation Program

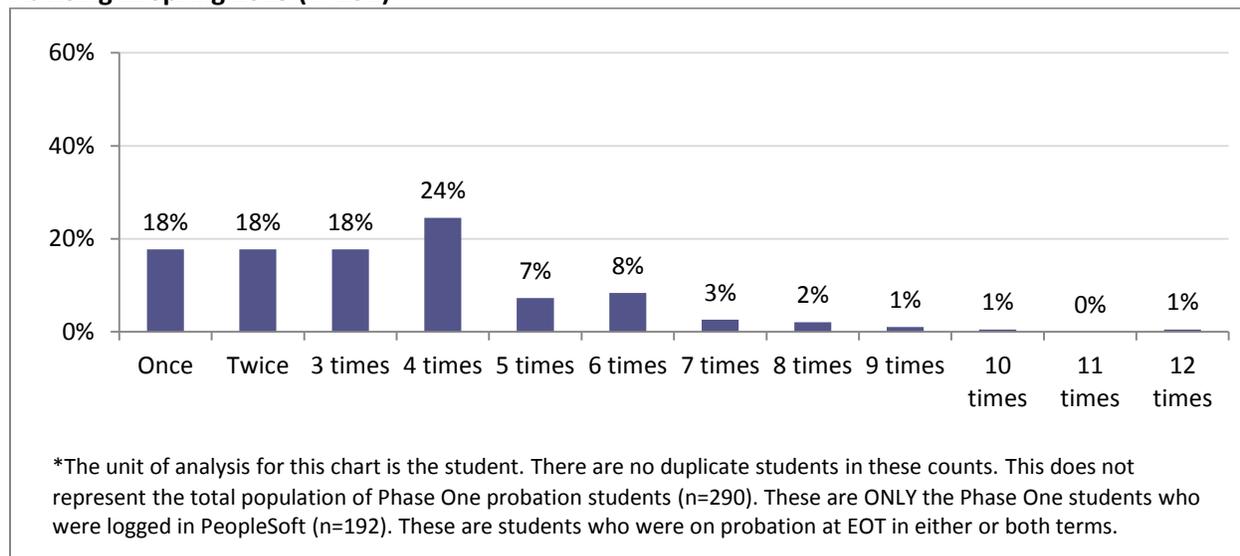
A high percentage of FTF are on academic probation at HSU. In order to address this, a new academic probation program was instituted for Phase One students in spring 2015. We had already seen a reduced percentage of FTF students on academic probation after the fall semester (28% in spring 2014 versus 25.1% in spring 2015), but wanted to actively address the issues with students in spring 2015 and beyond. This new probation program required students new to academic probation to meet with their academic advisor to discuss the probation process and develop strategies to return to good academic standing.

Table 1: Process for Students on Probation

Phase One students	Non Phase One students
Complete Learning Center Tutorial Hold removed by the Learning Center	Complete Learning Center Tutorial Hold removed by the Learning Center
Complete online Academic Success plan	Complete Academic Success plan
Required to meet with Phase One Advisor to discuss probation	
Complete self-assessment intake sheet and discuss with advisor	
Develop strategies to return to good academic standing	
Complete comprehensive academic success plan	

Preliminary results indicate students on academic probation are willing to speak with their advisors on personal and academic issues. The majority of them saw their academic advisor multiple times (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: AY 2014-15: Number of Times Phase One Probationary Students were Served by Academic Advising in Spring 2015 (n=192)*



Integration of Mapworks into the Advising Process

Currently, there are two main ways that Phase One Advisors are using Mapworks: Communication Logs and Academic Updates. There are additional features that Mapworks offers that will be incorporated into advising protocols in the future (i.e. Early Alert and Freshmen Survey).

Communication Log

An effective “tag-team” strategy for offering a coordinated delivery of service requires the use of a shared communication system. The Mapworks tool offers this functionality. During 2014-2015, Phase One advisors and RAMP piloted this strategy in service to Phase One students. Each meeting with a student was recorded, and a brief summary of the meeting (with extensive education regarding issues around confidentiality) was entered. This communication trail facilitates shared knowledge of Phase One students by both advisors and mentors. It also provides a history of communication and discussions for the faculty members when students transition to faculty advisors in their junior year.

Academic Updates

Formerly known as mid-semester evaluations, the Academic Updates process was revised and refined to offer a probable intervention as opposed to a possible intervention –that is, the assurance that someone (professional advisor) would act on the update that was submitted. In the fall 2014 semester, Academic Updates were solicited from a select group of faculty, for a select group of Phase One students. 70% of Phase One students received an Academic Update. 33 of the 35 faculty solicited provided an Academic Update. For spring 2015, Academic Updates were only solicited on behalf of Phase One students who were on academic probation. 35 of the 43 faculty members submitted Academic Updates in spring 2015. Advisors contacted all students who received an Academic Update. The plan for fall 2015 was cancelled due to significant delays by Mapworks. However, we plan to reintroduce them in spring 2016.

Plans for Evaluating and Assessing the New Advising Model

Phase One served as a pilot for learning valuable lessons about what needs to be in place at the program and university levels in order to fully implement and accurately assess the advising plan. Currently, student outcomes (i.e. retention, academic progress, etc.) cannot be assessed because of in/out migration to Phase One due to changes in major. The nature of partial implementation means that the Phase One group did not stay constant throughout the year, resulting in varying levels of advising. This made it impossible to establish a reliable control group to test against. AY 2016-17 will be the first full year of implementation and will serve as HSU's baseline year. The following measures will be tracked as part of the long-term assessment plan:

- Academic advising service usage
- Service delivery measures
- Retention (*with the understanding that advising is just one component within a larger set of factors that impact retention*)
- Major migration
 - Number of times students changed their majors (are migration rates decreasing?)
- Academic Probation (*with the understanding that advising is just one component within a larger set of factors that impact retention*)
 - Probation rates
 - Academic success rates for student on probation
 - GPA for probation students by major
- Term to term GPA
- Time to degree
- Qualitative measures to assess student learning outcomes (i.e. understanding of how to read DARS, understanding the purpose and value of general education, etc.)
- Faculty feedback about the process (how prepared are students, level of understanding of degree requirements, etc.)
- Greater awareness and usage of career related experiences

Next Steps

The priority in implementing the recommendations of the Advising Working Group continues to be the successful transition to professional advisors for all first and second year students (Phase Two). In order to move to Phase Two, additional advisors need to be hired and some fundamental questions need to be answered (see below). When we move to Phase Two, a “lead advisor” for each college will act as a liaison between departments, colleges and professional advisors.

Key questions to be answered:

Priorities for OAA

- Is there an **opt-out option**? Or will it truly be all first and second year students?
 - If there is an opt-out, what is the criteria to opt-out? (i.e. certain percentage of graduation/retention rates).
 - How to ensure a consistent experience for ALL HSU students (i.e. logistics - advisors assigned at the same time-August 1st, same communication plan, etc.)
 - Consistent/coordinated training, technology use
 - Accountability – who ensures opt-out criteria being met
 - Departments with freshmen or professional advisors (Dan Flockart, Business)-how are they included (similar questions re: opt-out above)?
- **Timeline** for transitioning to faculty advisors at 3 or 4 semesters or by credits?
- **Assigned by college or meta-majors** (if meta-majors, can they cross colleges, i.e. Psychology and Sociology)?
- **Where will the new advisors be housed** (need office space in departments)?

Additional Questions

- **Probation Advising** – The Learning Center is not the appropriate venue. Will faculty advise probation students (juniors, seniors) and what is the training process for them?
- What information do departments want to know about students to facilitate faculty advising assignments?
- What expectations are there of ACAC regarding serving the general student population in addition to assigned caseloads?
- How do we **integrate advising into HOP**?
- Will first-semester transfer students be assigned to professional advisors (Phase Three)?
- How will department hiring practices be affected (i.e. for those departments that hire lecturers for advising, they will not need as many as their caseload will drop in fall 2016)?

Key next steps - Spring 2016

In the spring 2016 semester, we would like to convene an advisory committee with a representative group of faculty members to provide feedback on the next steps in implementation of the Advising Working Group’s recommendations. These include developing a comprehensive delineation of appropriate roles for faculty and professional advisors and developing the transition plan for second-year students who will be advised by faculty in the near future. In addition to that, key next steps for spring 2016 include:

- Creation and dissemination of a communication plan to educate the campus community about the next steps of the new advising model. Included in this plan will be coordinated messaging to incoming students through Admissions and HOP.
- Hiring and training of new advisors.
- Office space will need to be secured to house these advisors, and the designation of advisors to departments will need to be determined (college, meta-major, etc.).
- Training for professional advisors by departments to provide advisors information about the department and major (department intake sheet).

Key next steps beyond Spring 2016

There are several recommendations from the Advising Working Group that are yet to be completed and require university-wide assistance. A few initiatives are currently underway that will address some of these recommendations, including UDirect implementation.

Table 2: Initiatives

AWG Recommendation	Status	Who's Responsible
Professional advisor for 1 st and 2 nd year students	2016 In process	ACAC
Professional advising available year-round	Summer 2016	ACAC
Student Mentors assigned to professional advisors	Complete	ACAC
Professional advisor for 1 st semester transfer students	Fall 2017?	ACAC
Smooth transition from professional advisor to faculty advisor	Fall 2016	ACAC
Incoming freshmen take skills assessment	2017	ACAC
Comprehensive online resource for advising	Spring 2017	ACAC
Technological process that help students progress through degree		U-Direct, ACAC,?
Accurate and appropriate MAPS		U-Direct, OAA?
Milestones and Benchmarks		U-Direct, OAA?
Eliminate Major Contract		U-Direct, OAA?