

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Academic Advising

February 12, 2018

An Updated Progress Report from the
Submission to the Higher Learning Commission, January 6,
2011

Introduction

The Higher Learning Commission Progress Report submitted in 2011 included updates such as the placement of the “University College Advising Center [UCAC} under the direct authority of the Office of the Provost and that its director be given broad responsibility to coordinate academic advising efforts across campus¹. At that time UCAC transitioned into the University Advising Center (UAC), and its student headcount was 9,390 and advising responsibilities were shared by UAC, Athletics, and Student Affairs. The Provost had funded nine new advising positions plus an operations manager for UAC.

Training of new advisors was mandatory and centralized under the UAC director, and a “Passport” was being used to track and ensure that advisors were attending workshops and training opportunities. The advising community had transitioned into using AdvisorTrac (Trac Systems by Redrock Software Corporation) a web-based advising and management system.

Organization

In Spring 2012 Advising consultants from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)² visited the campus and provided a Program Review Report. The report noted that the newly appointed Director of University Advising’s tie to UAC created confusion over authority on other advising programs. Soon after the Director moved to a newly created Office of University Advising (now Office of Advising Strategies) in order to provide distance from one advising center and to better oversee all of the University’s advising offices. OAS was tasked with coordinating New Advisor Training, managing the advising online tools, monitoring and providing transitional advising.

Advisor ratios varied across colleges in Spring 2014 and despite a shared advising model for University College students, the responsibility for formal advisement lay with UCAC advisors. Students visited multiple advising centers thus not lessening the advising load for UCAC and walk-in hours often resulted in a two-hour wait. To alleviate UCAC, plans were set in motion to admit all students as pre-majors directly into their degree granting colleges in order to distribute the advising loads equally amongst colleges. Most colleges had sufficient staffing to manage pre-major students, and advising positions shifted to accommodate those without sufficient staffing.

Training and professional development opportunities in Fall 2014 focused on techniques for advising underclassmen to prepare advisors for working with a population that had previously been served by UCAC. At the same time, integrated advisors (Athletic, Enrollment Management, Extended Learning, and Student Affairs Division) focus shifted from helping with degree planning to that of advocacy and support. The table below reflects planning that took place in 2014 as administrators prepared to re-organize the advising model.

¹ Appendix A, “Improving Academic Advising: A progress Report Submitted to the Higher Learning Commission, January 6, 2011.”

² Appendix B, “Academic Advising Program Review Report, March 2, 2012

Spring to Fall 2014 Projected Advising Staffing by Key Colleges³

College	Spring 2014 Advisors	Fall 2014 Advisors	Spring 2014 Ratio	Fall 2014 Ratio
Anderson School of Management	3	6	845:1	422:1
College of Arts & Sciences	18.25	20.25	511:1	460:1
College of Education	3.75	4.75	585:1	462:1
University College	19.5	13.5	219:1	316:1

As part of the advising re-organization, UAC transitioned back to reporting to the Dean of University College from the Office of the Provost and the name changed back to University College Advising Center (UCAC). By Fall 2014 all students were advised by the college of their major, and student-advisor ratios were projected to be at 383:1⁴. UCAC advised exploratory and pre-health majors rather than all majors, reducing their population significantly.

Staffing

By Fall 2017, we had 92 staff academic advising positions, including supervisors and managers within advising centers, for 18,913 undergraduates. The breakdown by college are as follows:

Fall 2017 Academic Advising Staffing

College	Advising Positions
Anderson School of Management	9.5
School of Architecture & Planning	2
College of Arts & Sciences	27
College of Education	11
School of Engineering	11
College of Fine Arts	3.5
Honors College	0 ⁵
School of Medicine (undergraduate upperclassmen)	5
College of Nursing	6
College of Pharmacy	2
College of Population Health	2
University College	12
University Libraries	1

³ Appendix C. "Advisor Ratios based on Fall 2012 major data"

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Advising Services have been provided out of University College and a faculty advisor

Additionally, integrated advisors provide important advising services to students. The Fall 2017 breakdown by area are as follows:

Fall 2017 Integrated Advising Staffing

Area	Advising Positions
Intercollegiate Athletics	7
Enrollment Management	6
Student Affairs	35
Provost (Global Education Office & OAS)	10

Advisor salaries, for positions with 100% of their duties involving daily advisor/student interaction, have become a prevailing issue as the average hourly wage is at \$19.12. The range is \$13.00 an hour to \$22.84. There are colleges with salaries at \$17.31 that face constant staff attrition to colleges that pay over \$22 an hour. Those colleges hire and train staff only to lose them to other colleges that offer a slightly higher wage. Even so, only eleven out of 57 with an Academic Advisor or Sr Academic Advisor titles earn more than \$20 an hour, so advisors are moving across colleges for a small \$2 an hour increase.

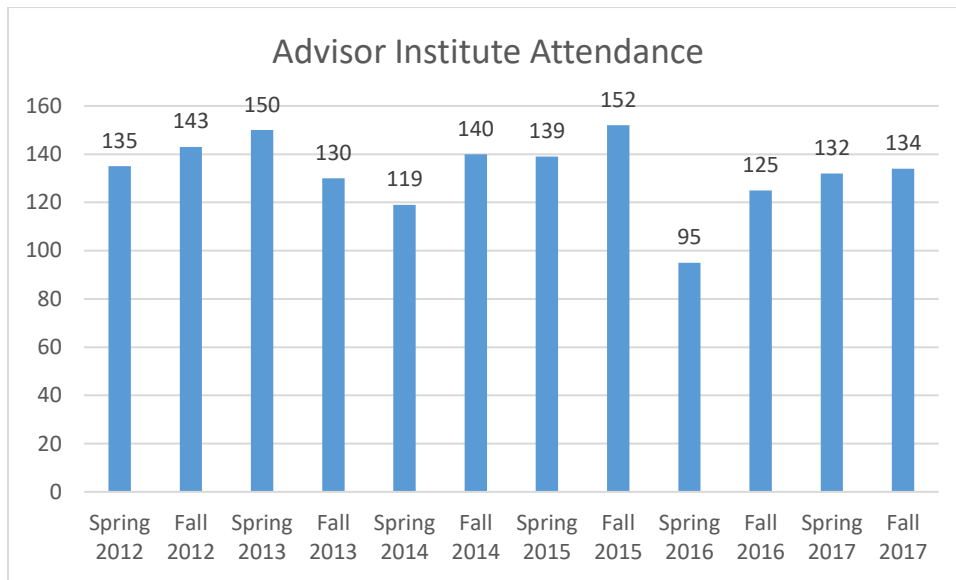
Professional Development

The Provost's Committee for Advising coordinated Professional Development then shifted to the Office of Advising Strategies in Fall 2017. Programs have included bi-annual Advisor Institutes, Advising Matters meetings, Advisor Awards, and occasional webinars. The programs were initially organized as sub-committees with rotating chairs. By 2017 all the committees were being chaired by the OAS Academic Advisement Specialist, therefore it made sense to institutionalize professional development by placing it under an administrative office rather than a committee.

Advisor Institute

The Institute has become a permanent offering that is well attended by main and branch campus advisors. Occasionally, advisors from the Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) were invited since they are the University's largest feeder of transfer students. At times, attendance dipped below 120 participants due to budgetary issues; however, since 2017 the Institute has benefited from having permanent funds. The advisor "Passport" had been used up to 2016 and was a means for advisors to keep track of their professional development participation. The tracking was recently replaced by Learning Central, the University's online learning management system, since it maintains a transcript that can be accessed by supervisors. OAS is able to more accurately track attendance at its sponsored events through Learning Central.

Advising Institute Attendance



A recent addition to our professional development portfolio are Advising Matters two-hour meetings. Topics that have been presented are both skills and informationally based. An Advising Center is featured at each meeting and venues changed so that advisors can be exposed to various areas of campus. The average attendance has been 63 advisors.

Webinars & Other Opportunities

PCA offered relevant Webinars that were available to the advising community at-large. **Insert facts here**. PCA also offered a few NACADA and NASPA conference registration scholarships. Advisors are encouraged to take part in the University's advocacy & support trainings such as Green Zone (Veterans), Safe Zone (LGTBQ), and Dream Zone (Dreamers),

Training

New Advisor Training

Since 2011, 274 advisors have attended New Advisor Training. The effort was originally coordinated out of UAC, and then centralized out of OUA 2013. Topics include, but not limited to, advising theories and approaches, identities intersectionality, UNM policies and procedures, and academic standing. New advisors are required to complete a portfolio at the end of their training to summarize their learning. The current total minimum amount of training hours required by OAS is 68.5.

Online Tool Training

OAS coordinates regular training of advising online tools such as Student Banner and LoboAchieve for staff and faculty advisors. System changes or upgrades also trigger trainings.

Facilities

In 2015, the College of Education expanded advising space that included small group advising sessions and faculty/staff/student interactions. Integrated technology solutions in those spaces such as large screens and technology and enhanced office furniture have been conducive to advisor workshops. Open spaces and mobile technology have allowed the New Student Orientation program to offer a convenient method for students taking placement exams

In January 2018, four School of Engineering staff moved to a newly remodeled space. The building has several open study spaces that encourages student to advisor interaction. A lounge and computer labs in the advising areas can be used for advising workshops and presentations.

The Anderson School of Management advising staff will move to a new building and space in Summer 2018. Their space will have state-of-the-art technology that will better serve their student population.

The College of Arts and Sciences has placed most of their advisors in departments of the majors they represent for convenient student access. This allows advisors to work closely with faculty and department administrators.

Technology

In Fall 2012, the University transitioned from AdvisorTrac to LoboAchieve (Starfish Solutions by Hobsons) as the web-based advising tool that allowed advisors access to past advising appointments, notes, referrals, and to-do lists. Students could schedule appointments with their advisor. Faculty could raise kudos or concerns in the system. Advisors were able to send email messages through LoboAchieve and save email correspondence through the system. At its height, LoboAcheive had 145 staff and 131 faculty users in both main, north, and branch campuses.

On May 2017, the University shifted from the Starfish Solutions by Hobsons platform to an advising application, LoboAchieve 2.0, developed by the University's Institute of Design & Innovation. Features on this application allow students to schedule appointment with their advisors, view past advising history and their academic record, and upload their academic goals. Currently 116 staff advisors and 59 faculty advisors use LoboAchieve 2.0. The number of advisor users has dropped because the platform design initially did not include graduate students.

LoboAchieve Student/Staff Interactions May 2017 – January 2018

Total Students who have scheduled an appointment	13,930
Total Students who have had a note left on account	22,853
Total number of students with advising session	16,610
Total number of students with appointment or session or note	23,024

Resources

Those in academic advising positions have had virtually no Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) since 2007 due to the University's extraordinary budget challenges. A few colleges are able to offer a better salary as others thus creating inequity within the University system. Overall, it has been difficult to retain advisors due to low salaries.

Assessment

A centralized advising assessment plan was established for the 2016-17 academic year. This assessment cycle taught us more about the assessment process than about advising. The Advising goals focused on the use of technology and participating in various efforts, and the measure of success depended on Banner and LoboAchieve data, which was immensely cumbersome. Going forward Advising goals and administrative unit objectives will be tied to the mission of the OAS and targeted toward students, units, advisors, or OAS. This will tell us more about the advising impact on the University community than the previous goals.

Conclusion

Much progress has been made in the past six years. The advising responsibilities shifting to the degree granting college of their major has equally distributed the advising load. Additionally students are being advised by staff that are highly familiar with their assigned degree plans. Training and professional development is institutionalized.