

# ACADEMIC ADVISING

Southern Illinois University

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AdviseU

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## [RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION STEPS]

This is the final report of the consultant to Southern Illinois University regarding the campus-wide advising program.

## Introduction

This report contains a series of observations and recommendations by Dr. Lynn Freeman, a consultant to Southern Illinois University (SIU) regarding the organization and delivery of academic advising. Prior to the site visit, the consultant reviewed a variety of reports and surveys related to academic advising. In addition, the consultant also explored the website to learn about advising on campus from an outsider's perspective. The consultant was asked to make observations and recommendations based on national best practices and research-backed strategies used at four year, public universities. Those practices and research findings are detailed in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter, 2005; and Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook, 2008. The consultant invites the reader to consult these resources for more detail on the strategies that are working in undergraduate student success and advising.

The purpose of inviting a consultant to review the advising program is to identify strategies that build on the strengths of academic advising at SIU, enabling it to better contribute to its institution-wide goals of improving retention, recruitment and student success and satisfaction. Advising is a critical component of student success and retention, in part because satisfaction with advising is the 'single most powerful predictor of satisfaction with the campus environment,' and satisfaction with the campus environment is in turn a strong predictor of student retention (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005).

The site visit was conducted on July 20-21, 2011. While on site, the consultant met with a wide variety of groups and individuals both formally and informally, including:

- Dr. Mark Amos, Director of Saluki First Year
- Dr. Julie Payne-Kirchmeier, Assistant Provost for University College
- Academic Deans
- Chief Academic Advisors
- Chancellor Rita Hartung Cheng
- Enrollment Manager Directors, including
  - Terri Harfst, Financial Aid
  - Jill Kirkpatrick, Bursar
  - Angie Royal, New Student Programs (University College)
  - Tiffany Spencer, Registrar
  - Katharine Suski, Admissions
  - Tamara Workman, Transfer Student Services
- Academic Advisors
- Tony Kirchmeier, Chair, Chief Academic Advisors

- Undergraduate Students
- Provost John Nicklow
- Carla Coppi, Director of International Programs & Services

The report is organized into sections and follows the organization of the Executive Summary:

- Observations and Findings
- High Priority Recommendations
- Additional Recommendations, and
- Implementation Steps.

## **Observations and Findings**

**1) The **organizational model**** for the delivery of advising services at SIU is not typical for large, public, four-year universities. The delivery is a mix of several models, which is chaotic and confusing for students, advisors and faculty; and it creates a silo culture, which has in turn created and continues to perpetuate several of the key challenges for SIU Advising.

The pervasive example of the impact of this ‘chaos’ model, as this consultant will call it, is the lack of consistency in how the institution handles undeclared or exploratory students.

‘Undeclared’ is the number one major of first year students across four year universities nationally, and about 55% of students will change their major in the first or second year. The lack of consistency in how, where, and by whom these students are advised in the SIU model results in many of the concerns the consultant observed or heard during her visit and in reviewing materials.

For example, in the “SIU Advisement Survey 2010”, one consistent theme is that students are not satisfied with advising in regard to ‘identifying alternative educational opportunities.’ This approach to advising is called exploration advising, whether it is for students who do not have a declared major or for students who have a declared major but want to change and need help deciding.

Another major impact of the chaos model at SIU is the absence of consistent training, outcomes, evaluation, assessment, job titles and job descriptions for academic advisors. There is too wide a range of pay, of responsibilities, and in the operational definitions of important (and misunderstood) advising strategies like ‘developmental advising,’ ‘intrusive advising’ and ‘exploratory advising.’ This disparity impacts the ability of academic advisors to do their job. Students, like advisors, have a disparity of experiences with advising, illustrated by the findings of the “SIUC Advisement Survey 2010”, which is discussed in more detail in Observation 5. The impact of this will also emerge later in the report.

The silo culture of advising on campus also means that advisors do not know each other, and have little opportunity to interact with each other to share information, experiences, frustrations and solutions. During the campus interview, the consultant noticed that advisors across colleges did not have the same information regarding common campus academic policy. The unavailability of opportunities for advisors to interact, communicate and use one another as a resource reinforces the silo culture, and the inconsistent experience that students have with advising. Finally, there is no leader, or champion, of advising. There is dispersed responsibility and no authority. When there is no champion, advising concerns by students, advisors, and faculty cannot be addressed systematically, efficiently or effectively. Regardless of the campus resolve to improve academic advising, without leadership that has responsibility, authority and accountability for advising, change will not be institutionalized or lasting. That lack of voice, leadership and accountability is the single most significant factor that carries through all of the observations in this report.

To address the serious issues created by the chaos model for advisors and students, the consultant will recommend ways to simplify and clarify the organization of advising services, particularly for new, and first- and second-year students.

**2) Academic policies** at SIU are complex, cumbersome and sometimes conflicting, as a result of not having a central academic policy ‘home’ or widely understood process. The consultant will offer recommendations to clarify the confusion in the academic policy process. During the campus visit, the consultant heard in many of the interviews that advisors spend too much time on ‘administrative tasks,’ paperwork, and trying to find answers to policy questions that should be readily available. When the consultant asked in several interviews, ‘Where does academic policy information come from?’ and ‘Where is the ‘home’ of academic policy?,’ she heard a different answer each time. Also, the consultant heard examples of the same academic policy being interpreted and applied differently in different offices.

It is understandable then that students are having an inconsistent experience and getting different answers depending on whom they ask. If students do not get accurate information when they seek it out, they cannot make decisions that enable them to be successful. As important, students are quick to become dissatisfied with advising, and advisors, when they receive conflicting or wrong information. When students become dissatisfied with advising, they stop seeing their advisor. Given the importance of the advising relationship in retention and students success literature, SIU should do everything possible to improve the academic policy process and communication channels.

Not only must advisors understand academic policy; they often must interpret and implement those policies. When they are unable to do that, or when it is so cumbersome it demands much of their time, they are not spending time with students on the developmental tasks of helping

them understand requirements, and make and implement decisions. Therefore, how academic policies decisions are made, how they are communicated, and where they reside on campus is within the scope of this consultant's observations and recommendations.

**3)** There are sufficient **human resources** available for advising loads, but those resources are not distributed or utilized in a way that effectively helps students on the front end of their college experience, in the first and second years.

First, advisors are spending up to 50% of their time doing administrative tasks. While advising work does involve necessary administrative work (on average 10-15% of an advisor's time), the heavy administrative work load of advisors at SIU results in less availability to students, and little time for developmental advising – by default, the advisor becomes an information service and a bureaucracy negotiator. Additionally, advisors are being asked to perform work that is far outside of their scope of responsibility, like handling the college admission process, which detracts even more from the time they can spend with students, and dilutes the effectiveness of academic advisors and advising resources.

Second, the campus does not have one recommended advisor-to-student ratio. Both research and national standards find that first-year students, students at risk, and exploratory students require a much smaller advisor to student ratio (150 students per advisor) than upper division students who are successfully pursuing a major (up to 500 students per advisor) (W. Habley, 2004, 'Advisor Load,' *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources*). Current advising loads do not adhere to these standards. In particular, the areas of the Center for Academic Success and Pre-major Advising are far above the recommended ratio.

Third, a brief audit of advisor salaries indicates that there is a \$20,000 range in salaries across academic advisors at SIU. Advisors annualized salaries range from \$29,800 to \$49,912. This range does not include Chief Academic Advisors.

Finally, 13%, or 7 out of 54 academic advisors, are loaded at less than 1.0 FTE. Historically, part-time advisors were justifiable because students were not on campus in the summer or during the breaks and so therefore needed not advisement. However, now that advising is recognized as critical to orientation and to long-term academic success for undergraduate students – particularly those who are exploratory or are considered at-risk – academic advisors **MUST** be available during those breaks, because these are exactly the times when first time and transfer students come to campus.

**4)** There is **no funding model** in place to reward the results of good academic advising (namely, retention, successful transition into the major, and graduation). It is unclear to the consultant how the goals to increase retention and student success through improved advising will be financially supported. A funding model that rewards the work of student academic support

services related to their successful transition to the academic college and the major – especially academic advising – will create the sense of shared purpose and mutually benefit the colleges and the providers of those support services. Such a funding model will also help reduce the advising and student service silos that exist across campus.

**5) Students are dissatisfied with advising, but not necessarily with advisors.** During the consultant’s visit on campus, she met with a group of students and had a chance to talk to random students she met around campus. Those informal conversations confirmed what was reported in the 2010 study about advising, and confirmed the inherent weaknesses in the lack of a consistent campus advising model. The 2010 report “SIUC Advisement Survey 2010”, found that responses were grouped as generally negative or generally positive depending on the college. This is indicative of a chaos advising model with no shared definitions, outcomes, or job descriptions of advisors. The report also found that students who want to change their major or are not sure of their major or career direction are the most dissatisfied with advising. Students at all colleges and universities expect three simple things from advisors: care, availability and accurate information (Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook, 2008, by Gordon, Habley and Grites). Students at SIU want more of each of these, but in particular, they want more advisor availability.

With a few exceptions, students report they are treated respectfully by their advisors, and that their advisors are professional. Given the challenges to advising, the advisors deserve a lot of credit that students reported informally and in the survey that advisors give them accurate information and are good resources for information, because it is clear that this information is not easily available to advisors.

Finally, students do not know what to expect from advising, especially if they change majors, in part because of the advising silos mentioned previously. If a student does not know what to expect from advising, they are not able to take advantage of the resources that are available and they do not see advisors as frequently as would be helpful. Students find their way through the university maze by luck or by determination, instead of by the intentional design of a strong academic advising program.

**6) Advisors are dissatisfied with their work,** yet they indicated that they love working with students. The people involved in the consulting visit characterized advisors’ jobs as heavily administrative, and full of ‘busy’ work that prevents them from working with students on exploration and developmental needs. Those interviewed said the advisor job itself lacks professionalization, and observed an absence of communication and inclusion about policies and processes that affect advising work. There are many, many reasons that advisors and their colleagues are dissatisfied with advising work.

When asked, enrollment directors characterized their work with advising as ‘we don’t work with them,’ even though their offices admit all students, including transfers, and determine and administer financial aid probation that affects more than 4,000 students. Deans characterized advisor work as hindered by technology and cumbersome academic policy and processes. Advisors characterized their work as being determined by the priorities of their unit at any given time, and therefore constantly changing and inconsistent. The consultant has pages and pages of descriptions of advisor work that illustrate there is no identifiable core of their work as professional academic advisors. Given the pressures on advisors from student demand, the lack of understanding by Enrollment Management and other staff, and the lack of value advisors perceive the campus has for advising, dissatisfaction with their work is to be expected.

During the consultant meetings with advisors, the advisors stated that they want to do a good job, but are not sure how to or even what it means to do a good job. They get mixed messages about priorities and how to spend their time from the people their supervisors. Finally, there are very few campus-wide messages about their value and the connection of their work to the campus mission.

All of the consultant’s recommendations in the next section address the campus’ collective lack of satisfaction with advising.

**7) Faculty/administrators are dissatisfied with advising,** yet they support advisors. Deans and faculty administrators cite three reasons: 1) a lack of a campus process for clear communication about policies, 2) too much bureaucracy (advisors referred to this same issue) for advisors to spend time with students, and 3) too much rigidity around policies and procedures. This group was very clear in their support for professional development and the professionalizing of the advising role on campus, as well as permission for academic advisors to be more intrusive with students and develop stronger relationships. It was not clear to the consultant that this group understood what is necessary to achieve those goals, which might create tension when campus-wide decisions are made to move in this direction. Finally, this group supported a role for faculty in advising, but did not have a unified definition of faculty advising, nor a clear set of parameters of the faculty advisor’s role

**8) The role and efficacy of technology in advising** is unclear and needs to be defined and developed. The consultant has studied the technology recommendations of the First Year Advising Committee. While advising technology is not specifically her expertise, the consultant observed a lot of resistance regarding technology from students, advisors and administrators.

Statements like, ‘Technology constrains advising’ and ‘Technology frustrates everyone involved in the advising process’, were the two most popular statements made to the consultant during the visit. The technology recommendations reflect a genuine effort to address this view.

**9)** Academic advising at SIU is **narrowly defined** as the selection and registration of classes. The pervasive functional definition of advising at this time includes selection and registering for classes. Advising is currently focused on programs, requirements, and policies. It does not appear to be focused on the development of quality relationships with students, although clearly many of the people involved in the consultant’s visit were able to articulate a broader definition of advising by using the terms of developmental advising and intrusive advising (**see APPENDIX A**). The paradox is that no one the consultant talked to was satisfied with the current definition or status of advising, yet it prevails.

**10)** Southern Illinois University has spent considerable time and resources studying advising and the experience of first year students in the context of **improving student success and retention**, indicating a campus commitment to improving on the hard work already being done in the area of advising.

The consultant cannot identify another place in the report to identify and address the impact of the tumultuous changes in leadership in the past five years. The people the consultant spoke with showed signs of stress, confusion, suspicion, excitement and hope that the period of turnover and tumult in the Provost’s and Chancellor’s offices has ended. The consultant appreciates that this might not be seen as immediately relevant to advising, but given the scope and impact of advising, the number of staff, faculty and students impacted by advising and the impact of those leadership changes, in her view, they are clearly connected.

Chancellor Cheng and Provost Nicklow understand the value of advising to student success and retention, and have a robust understanding of good academic advising, as well as an understanding of the key challenges in this area. They also understand that the campus is reeling from leadership changes. Given their vocal and visible support of student success and retention, and their commitment to leading the university into the future, they are poised to lead substantial change in the campus advising culture. There are no examples nationally of substantial change in advising culture at universities like SIU *without* this dedicated and visible leadership. In fact, according to the findings in the DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practices) study, ‘student success becomes an institutional priority when leaders make it so’ (Student Success in College, pg. 270).

At this time, students, faculty, administrators and advisors believe that academic advising can and should be enhanced; however, no single constituency has created enough forward momentum to bring about changes. This is the opportunity for the Chancellor and Provost to provide that forward momentum, while also reassuring the campus that they are building on the work the campus started before they arrived to their leadership positions.



## Ranked, Highest-Priority Recommendations

To address the ten observations and findings, the consultant identifies the following ranked priorities based on the student success and academic advising literature:

**1) Communication** – Staff involved in advising must 1) get information about curriculum and policy changes in a timely and consistent manner, 2) administration must establish a venue for advisors to communicate on a regular basis and an opportunity for advisors to get together a few times a year to develop as an effective campus wide advising team; and finally, 3) campus leadership – especially the Chancellor, Provost, and ‘Advising Champion’ – must convey an articulated and repeated vision and message about advising (see Recommendation 4 for specifics on the advising champion role).

A campus-wide advisory council is common at campuses like SIU. The Council is selected and charged by the Provost, and facilitates communication across campus about issues related to advising during the entire undergraduate experience, and across colleges and programs, builds relationships, helps develop buy-in about the campus advising model and process, and reports each semester to the Provost. The consultant recommends a model for SIU with a mission and representation that closely resembles the Advisory Council at the University of Washington (**Appendix C**). Note that the Council’s representation includes student service units and colleges. There are many models available, the UW model best addresses the issues identified in this report.

**2) Professionalization of advising** – To professionalize the advising staff, the campus must define the role of academic advisor across campus, evaluate current financial and human resources in advising, bring in national-level talent for on-campus professional development for advisors, and provide training and support for advisors to better use campus technologies and social media. The *Vision and Mission Statement*, **Appendix B**, written by the First Year Advising Committee in Spring 2011 is an excellent beginning for developing consistent training, outcomes, evaluation and assessment. Job titles and job descriptions should also be developed that are consistent, and tie into the mission of the unit they are part of and the university mission. Immediate attention should be given to reducing the amount of non-advising activities academic advisors are expected to be responsible for, in other words, they can no longer be the recipients of administrative tasks that have no other home.

**3) Transparency** – Decisions that affect advising must include advisors in the decision-making process, and the role of advising in the mission and direction of the university must be articulated frequently and consistently. This high priority recommendation is not specifically addressed by one action item because it is achieved through several already listed. One strategy to ensure transparency and communication is to invite advising representation on key

university committees including Orientation, Enrollment Management, Academic Policy, and Curriculum. In a shared governance model of university decision-making, advisors should be present on committees where decisions are made that impact their work. Those committees will benefit from the perspective of an advisor (the consultant has seen this result in better decisions by the committee in countless situations), and the advising community will become more integrated, have more buy-in, and have information it is currently lacking.

**4) Advising Champion** – SIU needs A SINGLE PERSON whose role it is to advocate for advisor and student needs regarding advising, and to facilitate campus-wide communication; the champion must also have authority that matches the responsibility. Advising resources must be channeled through one office (this is also where the ‘Advising Champion’ is located) – an office that has both the **responsibility and authority** for advising.

**5) Campus-wide model** – In order for advising to be enhanced at SIU, it is essential that there be a common and consistent approach to the organization of services across colleges. In a *total intake model* of advising, all new students enter through ONE advising program and move to college/faculty advising at an appropriate time when conditions have been met. Conditions, or criteria, might include their academic success (GPA of 2.0 or higher/in good academic standing) and readiness to declare a major. New students are defined as ‘new to the university,’ and includes transfer students until they successfully meet academic or advising requirements to enter a major in a college; note that ‘undeclared’ is not a major.

The consultant recommends that the staff within the units of the University College deliver comprehensive, developmental advising to all students with fewer than 30 credits post-high school graduation. In addition, those staff should also advise students with more than 30 credits who are undecided, who change majors, or who have academic difficulty.

This total intake model ensures that large numbers of students will use the programs and resources that SIU is making available to students. A campus that has strong resources and programs available for students does not ensure by their existence that students will use them. The advising program must be structured in a way that funnels students through those programs.

This model is built on the concept that there are two types of advising, both valued and important for a student’s overall integration and success from admission to graduation: intake advising and major advising (mentoring). *Intake advising* includes the introduction to university life, negotiating the university’s bureaucracy, focusing on general education, academic and social adjustment and identification and confirmation of major field. Intake advising is best delivered by full-time, professional academic advisors. According to the Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP) findings, schools in the study were, “especially good at front-

loading multiple resources to help students learn what it takes to succeed and to establish themselves as independent learners” (Student Success in College, pg. 268).

When a student has successfully adjusted to the university academic environment, has identified and committed to a major, and has acquired the skills necessary to be successful in the college/major of choice, a different advising strategy is required. Major advising, or *mentoring*, is the strength of faculty advisors. It focuses on the later part of the student’s academic experience.

The total intake model takes advantage of the strength of both professional academic advisors and faculty advisors, helps the student build a strong foundation for success, and provides a single campus-wide model that is identifiable, visual and simple for everyone to understand. For more information on advising models, and the total intake model in particular, refer to Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook, 2008, pp 242-252, by Gordon, Habley and Grites.

6) **Funding model** – based on the funding models that are under development, the financial decision-makers must identify ways to tie student academic support services, like advising, to the reward/accountability model of funding. If this does not happen, academic advising will continue to be seen as peripheral to the core work of the university, and to the colleges in particular. According to the DEEP findings, resource decisions and funding models at the high impact schools in this study are based on the mission, are data driven, and answer the question: ‘What will this investment produce in terms of student learning and success?’ (Student Success in College, pg. 272). When the funding model includes rewards for successes that support services AND the colleges are invested in, both will be committed to those successes, and a success in one area will not be seen as a threat to resources in another.

7) **Technology** - It is worth noting that technology *can* and *should* be used to enable advisors to spend more time with students and less time on administrative tasks. However, when the consultant asked a group of advisors what concerned them about the discussed changes in advising across campus, two cited *concern that technology would make them obsolete*. Others nodded in agreement. This suggests that advisors must better understand how technology can enhance their roles, rather than replace them. When advisors better understand the potential of technology and are not threatened by it, they will adopt it more successfully. The use of technology in advising must be included as a topic in advisor professional development and training.

The efficient use of technology at SIU will change the role of the academic advisors; enabling them to spend more time on student contact and on developmental and intrusive advising (**see APPENDIX A for definitions**).

## **Additional Recommendations:**

**Faculty Advising** –This report does not focus on the role of faculty advisors or the potential for further development of faculty advising at SIU. However, development of faculty advising as part of the university’s overall goal to increase student success and retention is also recommended in the future, particularly as part of a campus total intake model. Note that the advising model recommended in the **Campus-wide Model** section of the recommendations defines the role of faculty as working with upper division students. There are several monographs as well as a faculty advisor development resource kit available through NACADA, and the consultant has worked with other campuses to develop faculty advisor training and recognition programs.

**Peer Advising** – SIU would benefit from future development of peer advising within the University College to support professional advising, exploration and developmental advising for first- and second-year students beyond the UCOL 101 program. Mentors tied to the UCOL 101 program provide an academic and social connection to the university for first-year students. Depending on the scope of the mentoring program, it could be expanded to include peer advising, or paired with peer advising. NACADA recommends that peer advising and mentoring *never* replace professional advising. At SIU, peer advising could help students set up appointments, learn how to use major and career exploration websites, prepare for the advisor appointment, follow up on the advisor recommendations, discover and use the proper offices on campus (help reduce student run around), navigate campus bureaucracy, and learn how to read the general education or degree requirements on the degree audit. These skills can be taught by face-to-face interactions, an advising help line, advising chat rooms during off hours, and technology that teaches basic registration steps. A strong peer advising program requires additional resources, as well as excellent hiring, training and supervision practices. As is the case with faculty advising, there are excellent resources available to help guide SIU through the development of a peer advising program.

## **Implementation Steps**

### **1) Establish campus-wide communication strategies that enable advisors to communicate with each other and with people on campus who make decisions that affect advising.**

A) There are several meetings that currently take place that members may think serve this purpose, but, frankly, they do not. The ‘Chief’s’ meeting should be discontinued in favor of a newly formed, broader communication group, possibly an Advisory Council. The Enrollment Directors also hold a regular meeting that includes information and decision making that affects advising; while that meeting may not be discontinued

because of its scope, any information or decision making that impacts advising should be part of the Advisory Council agenda.

B) In addition, a campus-wide email list should be established by the 'Champion' for all advisors, with membership on the list required for academic advisors. The email list can and **should** be used for lower order information, reminders, and as a source for announcements about training, curriculum, policies, and community building activities. While the 'Champion' should take the lead for establishing it, everyone in the advising community will use it.

C) The chancellor or the provost should host a low-key social for all advisors to attend. The purpose of the event is primarily to thank advisors for their work and to give them an opportunity to meet each other. This event could also be used to share a summary of the key observations of this report, and what actions are being immediately taken to support them. This might include the creation of an email list, an advisory council, professional development opportunities, the acknowledgement that SIU is committed to moving advising into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, etc. Announcements or actions must be concrete, must address their concerns and must be followed through quickly. This immediate step addresses communication; as well as addresses morale and confusion about changes on campus.

2) **Identify the office that is responsible for university-wide academic policy**, formalize the academic policy process and communicate it widely and repeatedly, particularly to faculty and academic advisors. It is not clear to the consultant that this exists; if it does, it must be tied into the recommended communication improvements. If it does not, it is critical that this be acted on immediately by governance and promoted to advisors, faculty and enrollment directors.

3) Examine whether **advising resources** are aligned with the institution's priorities of retention and student success. Human resources generated a report that includes advisor salary data, total number of advisors; type and length of contracts; and distribution across colleges and programs. The purpose of this information is to help understand how resources are currently distributed, if they are distributed in the most effective way, and to begin the work of professionalizing the role of the academic advisor at SIU. Currently, there are inadequate resources supporting students who have not declared a major, who are changing majors, or who are at-risk.

4) Establish a year-long advisor **professional development program** that brings speakers and workshops to campus in the areas of technology, developmental advising, supervision and first year advising needs. The program should also include workshops for group/team development. All professional advisors should be invited to participate. Professional development can be

immediately and inexpensively provided by experts on campus to help advisors better use existing technology, and develop comfort with social media as advising tools. Participation in professional development should be a requirement of all advisors.

5) Immediately adopt the ***Vision and Mission Statement*** (Appendix B) written by the First Year Advising Committee in Spring 2011, and communicate it widely: it is the starting point for developing job titles and descriptions, consistent training, outcomes, evaluation and assessment for all academic advising on campus.

6) The adoption and implementation of the Feb 10, 2011 proposal for the creation of the University College, and the resulting reorganization of New Student Programs, Saluki First Year, Pre-Major Advising, the Center for Academic Success, Student Support Services, Supplemental Instruction, Career Services, Core Curriculum and University Honors is an invaluable step toward improving advising across campus. This unit should be **expanded to include ALL undeclared/exploring students regardless of college**. In effect, the full implementation of this plan also results in the adoption of one advising model for campus, the **total intake model**.

7) This report also recommends that the campus '**Advising Champion**' be part of the University College, and that his or her sole responsibility be to champion the university advising program. The consultant has not named this position the traditional title of director or dean because the title is somewhat irrelevant. The focus of this recommendation is that the authority, responsibility and resources are assigned to one person, and are sufficient to appropriately support the advising of SIU's first year, at-risk, major changing, exploratory/undeclared and incoming students.

8) Chancellor Cheng and Provost Nicklow are strongly encouraged to regularly speak about their **top two or three priorities** every time they speak to groups on campus about *any* topic, and to include improved advisement as one of these. Their leadership is imperative to help the campus community understand that all of their many initiatives are really part of just two or three priorities. They are encouraged to identify advising's part in student success and retention, to note that student success and retention is part of everyone's responsibility, and to advance *their* vision for advising for SIU. Their leadership message must be repeated in order for it to be widely heard and absorbed.

There are no implementation actions for the Additional Recommendations at this time because the eight action steps are substantial and deserve immediate and complete attention. The Additional Recommendations are longer term goals, to be pursued after progress is made on the initial High-Priority Recommendations.

## **Implementation Timeline:**

### **December 2011:**

Chancellor Cheng and Provost Nicklow invite academic advisors, Enrollment Directors and others whose participation will be necessary for positively changing the campus culture and practice of academic advising. The consultant will present findings, recommendations and implementation timeline and facilitate discussion about how to work together to achieve the campus' vision for advising.

Provost Nicklow invites deans and directors of units who have a considerable and positive investment in academic advising to identify 2-3 people to be part of a campus-wide Undergraduate Academic Advising Council. Provost Nicklow appoints the Council, provides a charge, mission and initial priorities. The Council should be prepared to begin meeting in Spring 2012. This Council takes the place of the other groups who have been meeting to make policy or decisions that affect the work of academic advisors. When this Council begins, those should end. This is not an additional advising-related committee, it is *the* Advising Council.

Create an all advisor list serve. Anyone who is an academic advisor, or has substantial academic advising duties as part of their responsibilities, should be included. This list is not optional, one cannot self- 'unsubscribe'. While the list is closed to anyone but its members, all members of the list can post to it (versus just the 'administrator').

### **Spring 2012:**

Provost Nicklow must identify what office is responsible for university-wide academic policies that impact undergraduates and the process of policy making. An immediate professional development activity for the Advisory Council is learn and understand the process of how academic policies get made, where they are 'kept' and how they can be referenced. Members of the Council will be resources to their departments and colleagues, and be able to communicate what they have learned. This is high priority, initial task for both the Provost and the Council. Even when shared governance is the decision making model for a campus, there must still be a process, a repository and a keeper of those policies.

Provost Nicklow identifies the 'Advising Champion' and announces this to campus. This person's only responsibility is the campus advising program, and he or she reports to the Provost. This is not an add-on role. The initial tasks are to implement the changes the campus decides to make, to build communication channels, and to keep academic advising highly visible to the campus community.

The Advising Council (likely a sub-group, not the whole Council) develops a two year timeline for campus-wide professional development for academic advisors. Advisors at SIU know what they want for professional development, so they should be put in charge of accomplishing an immediate and long-term strategy for professional development that enables them to achieve campus advising goals.

**By the end of the 2011-2012 fiscal year:**

Advising resources and the funding strategy for services outside of the academic colleges must be included in the campus funding model before it is finalized, preferably by the end of the 2011-2012 fiscal year. None of this work will be able achievable if the resources aren't reorganized to support it. The model should allow for a 2-3 year implementation of changes to advising, since those changes will not happen all at one time.

**Implementation of the campus-wide, total intake advising model:**

**Fall 2012:**

1) All incoming and current undeclared/exploratory students are advised within University College programs.

Based on an examination of university data, resources are realigned so that the University College programs have adequate FTE to serve this population. This may mean that advisors are moved from a college where they are currently advising students who are undeclared in the college to a program within the University College.

2) Campus has a shared understanding of what undeclared advising is, and what students will know and be able to do when the student transitions to college/major advising.

3) All advisors, regardless of program, are using a common set of outcomes for FIRST YEAR advising.

**Fall 2013:**

Full implementation of the total intake model includes eventually moving all first year students through a common advising experience, regardless of major. At SIU, this will be the University College, which has already been identified as the division that will provide the foundation for a common first year experience. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of implementation, all incoming students are assigned to advising through the University College.



This year, the Advisory Council should look at ways it can support faculty advising, including being a vehicle for colleges and departments to share what is working for them and to learn from each other. The Council should examine how faculty advising is defined and recognized. Faculty advising must be part of the continuum of the student's academic advising experience, therefore, it must be included in the charge and purview of the Council and the Advising Champion.

**Final Note:**

It is relatively easy to talk about changing advising on a campus. It becomes extremely difficult when it is time to realign resources, change reporting structures, assign accountability and change the actual work that caring and committed people are doing. SIU is at a critical juncture; not taking decisive action will make all of the current observations and findings more pronounced. SIU will not be able to make a difference in how students experience advising or the role and impact of advising in retention and student success without the very difficult tasks of realigning resources, changing reporting structures, assigning accountability, and fundamentally altering the way advisors do their day-to-day work.

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## **Appendix A Common Definitions within the Academic Advising Profession**

### **Developmental Advising –**

“... Developmental counseling or advising is concerned not only with a specific personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavior awareness, and problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills.”

“A developmental view of academic advising as teaching.” Journal of College Student Personnel, volume 13, pp. 12-17. Crookston, 1972

### **Intrusive Advising –**

The intrusive model of advising is an action-oriented approach to involving and motivating students to seek help when needed. Intrusive advising involves proactive interactions with students, with the intention of connecting with them before a situation occurs that cannot be fixed. Intrusive advising is not “hand-holding” or parenting, but rather active concern for students’ academic preparation; it is a willingness to assist students in exploring services and programs to improve skills and increase academic motivation.

W.R. Earl, “Intrusive advising of freshmen in academic difficulty”. *NACADA Journal*, 8, 27-33.; Upcraft & Kramer, “Intrusive advising as discussed in the first-year academic advising: patterns in the present, pathways to the future.” *Academic Advising and Barton College*, 1-2, 1995

**Comprehensive Advising, O’Banion’s model –** The process of comprehensive academic advising includes the following dimensions:

- (1) exploration of life goals,
- (2) exploration of career goals,
- (3) major decision,
- (4) course selection, and
- (5) course registration.

Teaching and Learning in the Community College O’Banion, 1972/94

## **Appendix B Vision and Mission Statement**

Adopted Spring 2011, First Year Advisement Committee

Academic Advising at Southern Illinois University is dedicated to student learning and individual development. Within this context, Academic Advising will help serve as an institutional link, supporting students' acculturation at SIU and their successful progress toward their chosen educational goals. Academic Advisors solicit ongoing feedback from students and are concerned with student achievement, retention, core learning objective and graduation.

- Assist students with defining their educational goals and with developing an educational plan consistent with their career goals.
- Challenge and support student understanding of the relationship between those goals and their interests, skills, abilities and values.
- Provide institutional policies, resources, procedures and additional programs to assist in the development of student' knowledge and understanding.
- Recognize and respect the diversity of their students.
- Refer students, as needed to appropriate campus agencies, faculty and staff.
- Appraise students' progress toward their educational goals.
- Promote students' engagement in the educational community.
- Raise students' awareness of co-curricular activities.
- Complete and maintain accurate academic documentation – including records of advising sessions with students – required to track students' progress through their education at SIU.
- Engage in appropriate professional development and remain current in the field.

## **Appendix C University of Washington Advisory Council Model**

### **Mission & Charter**

The Undergraduate Academic Advising Council is a University of Washington Seattle advisory committee convened by the Vice Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. The Council is composed of undergraduate academic advisers from a broad spectrum of advising units.

*The Council's tasks include:*

- Proposing and vetting advising initiatives and policy changes.
- Developing reliable lines of communication for advisers with campus advising units, the university's administration, and other university and off-campus groups.
- Advancing understanding of the purpose and function of academic advising.
- Identifying and promoting professional development opportunities for advisers.
- Providing a forum for assessing undergraduate advising and a venue for innovation and change.
- Ensuring that advisers are involved in university projects that impact their work.
- We are committed to understanding differences within the advising community and to speaking of each other in supportive ways.

### *Council Structure*

**Membership:** For its initial organizational period of six months, Council members were appointed by the Vice Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. Beginning with membership transitions in August 2009, the Council has been restructured to include representation from the eight Advising Links, as well as from centralized advising units and At-Large positions.

### ***Type of Position Number of Positions***

- ArtsLink 1
- BioLink 1
- Business Link 1
- EnviroLink 1
- Math/PhysSci Link 1
- SLink 1
- TechLink 1
- WordLink 1
- Gateway Advising 1
- Office of Minority Affairs/Diversity 1

- UAA Assistant Dean 1
- At-Large 4
- Council Chair
- (The Vice Chair is also a representative from one of the above categories.) 1

***Selection of Members:*** The Council will form a Transition Committee, chaired by the Council Vice-Chair, to facilitate the process for selection of new members. As members representing the eight Advising Links, Gateway and the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity (OMA/D) rotate off the Council, replacements will be solicited to fill the vacant positions. Advising Links leaders, with input from their membership, will forward their nominations for new members to the Transition Committee. Leadership within Gateway and OMA/D will forward nominations to fill their vacant positions, as needed. When replacing At-Large members, the Transition Committee will review the overall Council make-up and will solicit nominations for replacements from sources that will maintain a good balance for the Council. In arriving at nominations for Council membership, leaders from the Advising Links and centralized units will be encouraged to seek a balance between adviser experience and leadership potential and the desire to have new voices heard.

***Subcommittees and Work Groups:*** Subcommittees and work groups consisting of Council members and, as appropriate, members of the broader advising community will be formed on an as-needed basis.

***Consultant's Note:*** The key points in this example are 1) it is representative; 2) it has the weight of the Provost's office behind it; 3) it includes people from units who do not do advising, but work closely with advisors and make decisions that affect advisors' work.