

Drake University Academic Advising Model Proposal

Establishment of a Blended Advising Model

Submitted by the Advising TIG

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Overview

The Advising TIG was created to strengthen the role and delivery of academic advising due to its significant importance for both the undergraduate and graduate populations, the level of dissatisfaction expressed by students across levels in the current delivery of advising, and the significant scope of this project. Assessment data (NSSE, Drake Student Survey, Drake Advising Survey) have consistently identified academic advising as an area of weakness and dissatisfaction among the campus community. During the 2013-14 academic year, the Advising TIG completed a comprehensive review of academic advising at Drake University and reviewed current literature regarding best practices in academic advising. Based on this work, the Advising TIG proposes a shift away from the faculty-only advising model to a blended advising model for undergraduate students that integrates both faculty and staff advisors. The purpose of this proposal is to **begin the conversation** about the implementation of a blended advising model at Drake University, including the benefits, challenges, and opportunities the model presents to faculty, staff, and students. The Advising TIG acknowledges there are many details and aspects of advising that need to be addressed as this process moves forward.

Proposed Structure for an Advising Model

The Advising TIG proposes a "Blended Advising Model" for Drake undergraduate and pre-pharmacy students. Through the blended advising model, students will be assigned a faculty advisor related to their major/area of study and a professional staff advisor. The goal of the blended model is to provide students with consistency and accuracy while strengthening the academic and administrative resources available to students.

Role of the Faculty Advisor: To serve as a resource for students with regard to their academic major/area of study and provide guidance on course selection, career planning, and professional networking and connections. Faculty advisors will assist students with the selection coursework for their academic major, identifying opportunities for professional development, engaging in discussions about the appropriateness of their chosen career track or career options, and making appropriate referrals to university student service offices when necessary. *Key responsibilities:* academic advising for major/area of study, course selection related to career goals, professional guidance, and career planning, etc.

Role of the Professional Staff Advisor: To serve as a resource for students with regard to university policies and procedures, campus resources, registration, Drake Curriculum, and graduation requirements. All professional staff advisors will be cross-trained in professional and career development resources, academic achievement resources, and basic knowledge of all majors/minors/concentrations. *Key responsibilities include:* advising on general graduation requirements and Drake Curriculum, registration, retention outreach, changes to academic record, individual student degree audit updates and maintenance based on faculty advisor recommendations, etc.

Role of the Student: To actively engage in their educational journey through regular contact with all advisors, familiarity with campus policies and procedures, and use of campus resources. *Key responsibilities:* maintaining contact with advisors, asking for assistance when needed, preparing questions and potential class schedules ahead of advisor meetings, being familiar with campus policies/procedures, taking responsibility for deadlines, and utilizing online resources, such as the unofficial transcript and degree audit, to track progress toward graduation.

Benefits and Opportunities for Professional Staff Advisors:

- Responsible for a significantly heavier advising load than faculty advisors
- Assignments could be made based on student attributes/areas of interest/programs/etc.
- Follow students through their college career regardless of major changes, allowing for consistency for the student
- Coordinate/deliver advising training and development for students and faculty advisors
- Cross-trained in professional and career development resources, academic achievement resources, etc.
- Provide retention-related support/outreach
- Track graduation progress
- Role in orientation advising/registration

To Be Addressed in Future Discussions:

- Further delineation/definition of the roles and responsibilities of a faculty vs. staff advisor
- Professional staff advisor structure (number of positions needed, office space, funding, etc.)
- Resources for the new model
- Develop a communication plan
- Technology Needs: Reporting capabilities, degree audit reports, documentation system, etc.
- Compensation/reward/recognition
- Workload
- Advisor assignments/changes
- Training and ongoing development
- Implementation of the advising model
- Advising assessment/evaluation
- Integration of peer mentors into the advising model
- Graduate/professional student advising