




The University of Vermont

Office of the Provost
and Senior Vice President

TO: Academic Deans

FROM: David V. Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President 

DATE: September 25, 2014

SUBJECT: Charge to Develop an Academic Advising Plan in Each College/School

BACKGROUND

The President's *Strategic Action Plan* and the supporting *Academic Excellence Goals* both place a high priority on effective student advising and the *continuum* of academic advising and career planning.

In collaboration with the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning, the Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate has submitted a report (*Strengthening Academic Advising at UVM*, April 2014) with specific recommendations aimed at strengthening student advising. Their report was vetted with key constituencies including the Student Government Association, the Student Services Collaborative, and the Faculty Senate's Executive Council. The goal is to enhance both the academic experience and student success as reflected in retention and graduation rates and the success of our alumni. I am hopeful we can make significant progress in this area in the coming year.

The April 2014 report provides an assessment of our present system of advising, a gap analysis, and a forward-looking vision for what advising could and should be at the unit level and across the University – a system of *shared responsibility*. The report also distills and updates the key findings of multiple prior reports on advising prepared over the past decade at UVM. You can access the report on the Faculty Senate website under Recent Updates.

A well-articulated, broadly promoted and understood, and effective academic advising plan at the level of the college/school is at the core of a comprehensive, student-centered advising model with shared responsibility and shared accountability. Your advising plan sets the stage for creating the “advising compact” we have discussed at PALC meetings. And while each college/school may have its own advising plan that reflects its particular academic disciplines and is designed to best meet the needs of its students, it is likely that deans can learn from one another in identifying and adopting best practices.

SPECIFIC CHARGE TO THE DEANS

RE: Academic Advising

In response to the *Strengthening Academic Advising at UVM* report, and consistent with our discussions in the Provost's Academic Leadership Council, I am writing to charge each of the academic deans with establishing a comprehensive academic advising plan for their respective units. I expect some of you already have such plans and are operating effectively under them. In those cases, please use this opportunity to revisit your plans and ensure that they meet the objectives outlined below.

The advising plans should be based on best practices and tailored to the unique needs of students in the unit. Each plan should:

- Include guidelines for advising responsibilities in workload assignments, in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement or the College of Medicine Faculty Handbook (as appropriate), and clearly indicate how advising is considered in performance reviews;
- Recognize faculty members and staff members who excel at student advising;
- Ensure developmentally responsive advisement sessions by class year (First-Year through Senior Year) and specialty needs (e.g., Internships, Academic Minors, Study Abroad, Dual Bachelors-Masters Programs) coordinated by faculty members and/or advising professionals;
- Seek ways to engage and involve third and fourth year students as peer mentors to first-year students in designated first-year courses; and
- Ensure that all first-year students receive, during their first semester, an orientation to academic advising and associated roles and responsibilities, as well as information about the Four-Year Plan for Career Success.

Your unit's plan for academic advising should build upon what already works well in your college/school. But you should also use this opportunity to re-evaluate advising in your units, to reflect on changes in advising needs and modalities, to learn from best practices at UVM and elsewhere, and to incorporate new ideas into your advising models.

You should engage your faculty, students and student services staff in developing your advising plan. The Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee has offered to provide consultation and to connect you with resources such as those of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). If you'd like to draw on any of these resources, you can contact your college/school representative to the Committee or either of the co-chairs, Jennifer Prue (Jennifer.Prue@uvm.edu) or Thomas Chittenden (Thomas.Chittenden@uvm.edu).

Please submit your unit's plan for academic advising to Brian Reed, Associate Provost of Teaching and Learning, by **November 21, 2014**. Your plan should include statements about how you will assess advising effectiveness and how often you will review your advising procedures and consider making revisions. Brian will review each plan and provide feedback, and then compile all of the plans for us to review as a group at a PALC meeting.

It is incumbent on you, as dean, to ensure your advising plan is properly posted, updated as needed to provide timely and accurate information, and becomes a part of your college/school discourse on *academic excellence* and *student success*.

Thank you for your leadership on this important matter.

cc: Brian Reed, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning
Gayle Nunley, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Internationalization
Jennifer Prue, Co-Chair, Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate
Thomas Chittenden, Co-Chair, Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate