



Advising Center

2011 Administrative Program Review

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Executive Summary

The mission of the Advising Center is to promote the growth and development of students as they develop educational plans and choose career and life goals. Our holistic approach to advising students involves developing one-on-one relationships with students to support and encourage them in their decision making processes; teaching to assist with academic persistence and success; and serving as a professional resource to the total university community in support of individual and institutional goals.

Given the rapidly changing educational and economic landscape we currently face, the timing for an Administrative Program Review of the Advising Center could not be better. As a relative newcomer to WCU, my appointment as Director began in August 2008, I have found the process to be very helpful in providing me with additional background and history of the Advising Center and the University advising model. Advising Center staff, both past and present, provided input and suggestions and helped guide the development of the self-study document. I feel certain that the review team will learn much from Advising Center staff as well as representatives from other campus offices during the review process to assist in the development of recommendations to strengthen and enhance the student advising experience at WCU.

Beginning in fall 2008 and concluding in spring 2009, I chaired a Task Force on Advising that made several recommendations to improve the academic advising experience for students across campus. I have included recommendations from the Task Force in Appendix E. Although not all recommendations were implemented, several were and have made a positive impact.

Among them were the introduction of an Advising Syllabus and changes in new student orientation advising. We now teach students course registration and how to read a degree audit at orientation which has greatly reduced the anxiety level of students when they arrive and is also having a positive impact on students clearing for graduation. Through this program review we hope to gain further insights into the academic advising experience for our students and garner support for continued improvement.

Key findings from the Response to Review Criteria indicate that there are a number of services that the Advising Center provides that benefit students and the campus as a whole:

Provision of one on one developmental advising for all new freshman and transfer students that seeks to teach students the skills needed to successfully navigate the institution.

Housing the Academic Advisor for student athletes, supporting Athletics by monitoring academic eligibility and compliance.

Teaching the transition course USI 130, and the Learning Contract course LC 101 for students

placed on academic probation following their first term of enrollment.

Collaboration with IT on the development and ongoing maintenance of Catwalk.

Collaboration with Admissions and IT on the development of the Catamount Gateway.

Provision of walk-in advising services to all students, undeclared and declared.

Provision of faculty training on the Liberal Studies program and best practices in academic advising.

Advising Center advisors serve as liaisons to academic departments and Colleges and hold regular meetings with Deans, Associate Deans, Department Heads and Program Directors to facilitate communication between the departments and the Advising Center in support of students, faculty, and staff.

Support new student orientation by hosting advising sessions for students and parents.

Process course and university withdrawals, and Liberal Studies substitution/waivers, support Admissions and related offices with the process for readmit students, and facilitate the appeals process for students placed on academic suspension, refund appeals, and early alert follow up.

Creation and electronic publication of an Advising Day calendar of events.

I hope this document will provide the necessary information to enable you to conduct a thorough review of the Advising Center.

History and description of Unit

1. State the primary purpose and key functions of the unit.

Located in Killian Annex, the Advising Center offers comprehensive academic advising to all undeclared undergraduate students at Western Carolina University. The Center provides a holistic approach to advising by addressing students' academic and social potential.

The mission of the Advising Center is to promote the growth and development of our students as they develop educational plans and choose career and life goals. Our holistic approach to advising students involves developing one-on-one relationships with students to support and encourage them in their decision making processes; teaching to assist with academic persistence and success; and serving as a professional resource to the total university community in support of individual and institutional goals.

Key functions include:

Serve as first enrollment advisor for all new freshman students to include; collaborate with Registrar on transcript evaluation as needed, build first semester schedule based on Catwalk information, program requirements and transfer work applied if applicable, have initial meeting with students to facilitate transition to WCU, have meeting at fifth week grading period as needed, have early registration advising meeting.

Assist departments with transfer students; collaborate with Registrar on transcript evaluation, build first semester schedule based on Catwalk information, program requirements and transfer work applied, have initial meeting with transfer students to facilitate transition to major department.

Serve as resource to departments through liaisons including but not limited to; collaborate with Orientation staff to prepare department representatives for Orientations, provide Liberal Studies course availability updates, meet regularly with department heads to share process updates and program changes, communicate with faculty in support of student concerns and to assist in problem resolution.

Serve as a professional resource on academic advising to faculty and staff.

Process forms; course and university withdrawal, declaration of major, course waiver/substitution, overload, etc. for students and in support of academic departments.

Coordinate Academic Recovery programs including the Learning Contract for students suspended after their first semester at WCU.

Facilitate appeals process for students placed on academic suspension and refund appeals.

2. List the top 3-5 goals/priorities of the unit.

Support the University student body in their efforts to become well-rounded individuals and responsible learners.

Conduct intervention programs and processes designed to support identified "at risk" students in their efforts to achieve academic success.

Serve the University community by being an active and professional resource on topics of academic advising.

3. Summarize the history of this unit on campus.

In 1976, the CAP Center (Counseling, Advisement, and Placement Center) was formed. The primary purpose of the Counseling Program was to assist students at Western in making the most of their college experience. Their range of services available included individual and group counseling, testing, consultation and outreach programs. The Academic Advising component served all entering freshmen, including transfer students who were classified as freshmen. Students remained a CAP Center advisee until such time as they declared a major. Each student was assigned an academic advisor who worked with the student in planning an academic program. All advisors were full-time teaching faculty. Faculty designated which hours they would work at the CAP Center and notified their advisees when they would be available. Upper-class student advisors, selected on the basis of academic ability, leadership skills and interest in helping other students, also worked along with faculty advisors in the advising program for freshmen. The Placement Office served students in career planning, student employment (part-time jobs) and placement services, including job listings, resume service, campus interviews and seminars. The first component to split from the CAP Center was the Counseling component. The name was changed to Career and Academic Planning Center with the same functions as before with the addition of Cooperative Education. At that time faculty advisors were still utilized. The Director also advised athletes. As time passed, an additional staff person (non faculty) advised students. The CAP Center still advised all entering freshmen and transfers until they declared a major. When the Career component and the Academic Advising component split, the first professional staff advisors were employed. Advising hired part-time staff and full time staff at that time. Retention Services also became a part of the advising component. Faculty advisors were used for summer orientation sessions.

Around 1998 a full-time Athletic Advisor was hired along with additional professional staff. In 2000, The Catamount Tutoring Center, the Writing Center and the Student Technology Center became part of the Advising Center. Over time, the CAP Center became known as the Advising

and Student Success Center. In 2005, the OneStop Student Success Center (housed in the same building) came under the direction of the Advising Center Director.

In 2007, the Advising Center became a stand alone unit separate from the OneStop as did the Success Centers, both units are under separate direction from the Advising Center Director.

4. Describe the structure of the unit and how it is situated organizationally within the institution.

The Advising Center staff includes a Director, Associate Director, Office Manager, and nine Professional Advisors. The Professional Advisors serve as liaisons to departments in the colleges and serve all entering freshmen and transfers students. In addition, advisors teach the Learning Contract course and University Experience courses.

The Advising Center is part of the Enrollment Management Division housed in Academic Affairs and reports to the Senior Associate Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

5. Provide an organizational chart of the unit with every employee identified by title and name. Attach a brief (3-4 bullets) list of the primary duties carried out by each employee on the chart. Also, for each full-time staff member provide a full *curriculum vitae* or 2-page *vitae/résumé* summary.

See Appendix A – Organization Chart – Advising Center

See Appendix B – Staff curriculum vitae/resumes

6. If applicable, describe the number and contribution of student employees or graduate assistants to the unit's programs and services.

The Advising Center currently has one Graduate Assistant. The GA is trained as an academic advisor and provides general office support through shadowing advisors and front desk personnel. Once fully trained, the GA see's students for general advising as a walk-in advisor.

Work-study students, the number varies by term, provide general office support; filing, answering phones, front desk coverage, and other duties as may be assigned.

Alignment with WCU Mission, Vision, Values

1. How does the unit mission align with the university mission with specific reference to support of the QEP, *UNC Tomorrow* and the academic colleges/schools?

Advising Center advisors support the University mission as critical members of the WCU community of scholarship who help students navigate the institution and who provide tools and resources that enable students to jointly assume responsibility for their educational plan.

Particularly important in support of undecided students, the Advising Center assists students in exploring their academic and career goals, guiding them toward a major decision that is timely and correct based on that exploration. Students are referred to the Career Center for additional assistance with goal setting and career exploration and advisors and Career Center staff work together to guide students toward good decisions. Advising Center advisors support academic programs by preparing students to be active learners who understand requirements and expectations and can proactively seek out additional information as needed and ask relevant questions when necessary in order to successfully transition to the major.

Advising Center advisors play a key role in teaching students about the QEP and ways to integrate their curricular and co-curricular experiences in the development of an educational plan. By encouraging students to participate in at least one of the five primary avenues to integrated learning; Service Learning, undergraduate mentored research, internships, cooperative educational experiences, or international studies and study abroad, and through reflective conversations and referral to other campus and off campus resources, advisors help students to see the relationship between all of their life experiences, the coursework they are enrolled in, and the degree programs they are interested in. Additionally, advisors work closely with a number of campus offices to mentor students and connect them to resources, including the Career Center for career guidance and information on internships and student employment, the Academic Success Centers when students are having difficulty with academic issues, the Counseling Center for personal issues, Financial Aid when students are in danger of falling behind on satisfactory progress to retain their aid and to assist in preparation of a recovery plan if aid is lost, and Disability Services and Student Support Services when students are eligible for the services they provide. Advising Center advisors also play an important role in introducing students to the Educational Briefcase, how it works and what they will be using it for and providing the baseline entries that they will build on over the course of their academic career.

In support of *UNC Tomorrow*, Advising Center advisors teach students to effectively self manage and self advocate for their educational plan through the provision of tools and resources that

enable them to stay on track. Understanding where and how to find information is a key skill in today's information driven society and advisors play a major role in teaching those skills to students beginning with application and continuing through graduation. Advising Center staff worked collaboratively with Admissions staff to develop the Catamount Gateway, a web-based application that initially provides students feedback on their admission status and following admission guides them on a monthly basis through the steps they need to take prior to enrollment. Advising Center staff developed and maintain, in collaboration with IT, Catwalk, a web-based application that introduces students to the Liberal Studies requirements, administers a personality profile, and gathers information used by advisors to build the students preliminary first semester schedule. Electronic reminders are sent to students until they have completed all steps in Cat Walk and a report, developed by Advising Center staff, tracks those students for enrollment management. At Orientation, students meet their advisor and are taught how to do course registration, complete their schedule, and are introduced to the Degree Audit that enables them to monitor their academic progress and stay on track to graduation. These processes teach students valuable life skills in the areas of self-awareness, self-determination, and the use of technology.

2. How has the purpose of the unit changed in the past 5 years?

The primary purpose of the Advising Center is to provide academic advising support to all new freshman and transfer students and ongoing support for undeclared students and secondary support for declared students. That purpose has not changed. However, from 2005 to 2007, advisors also served as “customer services agents” with the One Stop in addition to their role as academic advisors. The additional responsibilities made it difficult to provide a developmental approach to advising students, so the Advising Center was decoupled from the One Stop and reestablished as a stand-alone unit. Since then changes have involved refining and enhancing our services in support of students and the University community. Catwalk, a web-based pre-Orientation program, was introduced in 2005 and continues to be updated and refined in response to student and staff feedback. Catwalk introduces students to the Liberal Studies requirements, allows students to select preferred courses, check the status of their tuition deposit and immunization, register for Orientation, and find out who their assigned professional advisor is. Catwalk assists the Advising Center, Student Support Services, TRACS, and the Honors College by streamlining and organizing administrative processes in preparation for Orientation. It enables us to assign professional advisors to incoming students, build tentative course schedules before a student arrives for orientation, and create reports related to class seating demands, major selection, and important enrollment requirements (i.e. tuition deposit and immunization

requirements). The Catamount Gateway, the result of a collaborative effort between the Advising Center, Admissions, and Information Technology was conceived in the summer of 2007 and launched November 2008. The Gateway fills the gap that previously existed for new students following admission to the University. Designed to ease the transition to Western Carolina, students are directed to log in to the Gateway in their receipt of application letter. Once logged in, the Gateway allows students to check their admission status and follow a timeline that directs them to information about the processes they need to complete prior to beginning their first semester at WCU and when they need to complete them. This includes things like making deposits, completing Financial Aid processes, accessing and completing Catwalk, and signing up for Orientation. All of this information is presented in the appropriate sequence so students and their families don't get ahead of the game or fall behind. We have developed better reports and lists and improved access to advisee information. In addition, we handle course and university withdrawals, Liberal Studies substitutions/waivers, and facilitate the refund appeals and appeals of academic suspension processes. Also, the Academic Success Program is no longer a part of the Advising Center, although the Director of the program is housed within the Advising Center suite, as is Orientation staff. Following recommendations from the 2009 Task Force on Advising, see Appendix E, we introduced a Syllabus for Advising and began teaching students course registration and how to read a degree audit at new student orientations. We lost a front desk position during budget cuts implemented in 2009; prior to the cuts we had a receptionist and an office manager. One of the impacts is that we are no longer able to administer a paper version of a post advising session survey that measured student satisfaction with the Advising Center and the individual advising experience.

3. How do you expect the purpose to change in the next 5 years?

Demand for services should grow to accommodate increased enrollment and in support of QEP initiatives, particularly the educational briefcase. The advisors role will evolve as we place a greater emphasis on mentoring and assisting students with co-curricular as well as academic issues. We anticipate that advisors will need to spend more time with individual student appointments in order to adequately cover all of the information we would like to teach them. This, along with the impact of Early College and the general increase in students coming in with transfer credit at all levels, may require changes in the University advising model. For example, we could require all first year students to be advised in the Advising Center for their first year of enrollment and all new transfer students for at least their first semester prior to declaration of major and transition to the academic departments.

Demand for the program

1. Who are the key users/participants of the unit's programs or services?

New, undeclared freshman and transfer students and declared students as secondary advisor; faculty and staff; perspective students, parents

2. How do you identify and measure demand for the unit's programs or services?

Visit number and reasons as recorded in our appointment scheduling software, AdvisorTrac. We pull data by month and academic term to determine total number of office visits, number of students, class level, college, and visit reason. These data enable us to understand demand for our services and our ability to meet that demand. Reports detailing center usage and visit reason for the past three years are included in Appendix C.

Review of emails and phone calls from students, parents, faculty, and staff with advising related questions and requests for problem resolution. These are not currently logged formally but are discussed on an ad hoc basis during staff meetings. These discussions often lead to changes in policy, process, and/or communication plan to improve services.

Periodic administration of student satisfaction surveys. When administered, a short paper form is distributed to students following their advising appointment and they are asked to complete it before they leave the office. Questions cover professionalism of front desk staff, professionalism and ability of advisor to meet student needs, overall satisfaction with Advising Center experience. Since the loss of one of our front desk positions we have been unable to effectively administer this survey.

3. List those other units on campus that interact most with this unit. Briefly describe the nature of those interactions.

Student Support Services, Honor's College, and the Teacher Recruitment Advising Career Services (TRACS) office in the College of Education and Allied Professions - collaborate on academic advising programs and serve as a professional resource.

Athletics – the Student Athlete Advisor provides academic advising and monitors academic compliance and eligibility of student athletes.

Orientation – collaborate on advising portion of new student orientations and program support as needed.

Academic Success Program – provide advising and administrative support.

Career Services – collaborate on support services for student's undecided about major and/or

career choices.

Catamount Academic Tutoring (CAT) Center – student referrals for academic assistance.

Registrar – collaborate on registration issues, academic standing, student issue resolution.

Student Affairs/Residential Living – collaborate on programming in support of student academic and social development.

4. List other units on campus that provide related programs and services.

Student Support Services, Honor's College, and the Teacher Recruitment Advising Career Services (TRACS) office

Teaching Fellows

International Programs

Educational Outreach

Academic departments (major advising)

Admissions, including transfer counselors at feeder NCCC's

5. Describe the unique contributions of this unit.

The Advising Center provides one on one, developmental advising for all first year students through initial meetings, fifth week grades follow up, and early registration advising.

We house the student athlete advisor, ensuring academic compliance and eligibility.

Advisors teach the University transition course USI 130 and the Learning Contract course, LC 101, for students placed on Academic Probation following their first semester at WCU.

Introduced a Syllabus for Advising. See Appendix D.

Collaborate with Residential Living on the fall midnight registration event for first semester freshman students and "s'mores with advisors" event.

Collaborated with Admissions and IT on the development of the Catamount Gateway and maintain content for the timeline portion of the Gateway.

Collaborated with IT on the development of Catwalk, a web-based pre-orientation program for all new resident campus students. Continue to collaborate with IT on content updates and a process of continual improvement on a bi-annual basis.

Provide walk-in advising services for all students.

Provide faculty training regarding the liberal studies program and academic advising.

Advising Center advisors serve as liaison to academic departments in the Colleges and hold regular meetings with Deans, Associate Deans, Department Heads and Program Directors.

Support new student orientation by hosting advising sessions for students and parents.

Process course and university withdrawals, refund appeals, and Liberal Studies substitution/waivers, support Admissions and related offices with the process for readmit students, and facilitate the appeals process for students placed on academic suspension, refund appeals, and early alert follow up.

Create and publish an Advising Day calendar of events. See Appendix F for examples of Advising Day communications. The Advising Day calendar of events can be viewed at <http://www.wcu.edu/26530.asp>.

Create and publish an Advising Center Newsletter twice a year. See Appendix G for the Spring 2010 Newsletter.

Quality

1. How do you identify and measure quality of the unit's programs or services? List the top benchmarks used to assess quality.

Assessment is an area that needs greater attention. The most recent assessment plan, from the academic year 2007-08, is included in Appendix D for reference.

Our most consistent measure of quality has been through an examination and discussion of; demand for services as evidenced by AdvisorTrac data, response rates to initial meeting advising appointments, number of students who visit the Advising Center rather than go to their major department for advising questions, and a question on the NSSE regarding advising as well as sophomore and senior surveys. We have also administered student satisfaction surveys in the past but not on an annual or bi-annual basis.

2. How do you use the results of quality assessments to improve programs and/or services? Provide specific examples.

Examining AdvisorTrac data has led to realignment of liaison roles to adjust advisee loads for balance and equity and to allow advisors to provide an appropriate level of student support. We will also adjust advisor availability in AdvisorTrac, adding more appointment times for example, in response to demand. The Catamount Gateway was developed in response to calls and survey data that indicated incoming students and their parents were unsure of what to do and when to do it between the point of application through acceptance and enrollment. The Catwalk application is evaluated and enhanced on a bi-annual basis in response to student and advisor feedback. An online calendar promoting Advising Day events was developed in response to staff and student feedback. Teaching methodology in the LC 101 and USI 130 classes has been improved in

response to end of term course evaluations and to keep pace with current trends in pedagogy.

3. What were the major accomplishments of the unit in the past 5 years? Include those directly related to unit functions AND/OR other contributions related to University goals.

Development of Catwalk application to help guide and prepare newly admitted students from the point of admission to orientation.

Development of the Catamount Gateway that allows students to check their admission status and follow a timeline that directs them to information about the processes they need to complete prior to beginning their first semester at WCU and when they need to complete them.

Introduce a Syllabus for Advising. See Appendix D.

Development of the Early Alert program, the administration of which has been transferred to Student Affairs.

Develop and post a calendar of events to better promote Advising Day. The Advising Day Calendar can be viewed at <http://www.wcu.edu/26530.asp>.

Create and publish bi-annual Advising Center Newsletter.

Update advising sessions at New Student Orientations to include teaching students how to perform course registration by adding at least one class to their schedule and teaching students how to run and interpret their degree audit.

Improved the teaching methodology for LC 101 and USI 130.

Presented on the Catamount Gateway and Catwalk at the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Annual Conference, October 2010.

Participate in WCU Open Houses and WCU on tour.

Collaborate with Residential Living on the midnight registration event for first semester freshman students and “s’mores with advisors”, an informal gathering where students can meet with advisors outside their offices.

Cost Effectiveness

1. How do you identify and measure cost effectiveness of this unit? List the top benchmarks used to assess cost effectiveness.

Cost effectiveness of the Advising Center to the institution can be measured by contributions to first year retention, collaborative support of first year programs, demand for services as indicated by visit data recorded in AdvisorTrac, contributions to Enrollment Management and support of academic departments. We have recently upgraded office computers so that advisors can perform

their technology based duties in a more timely and efficient manner. We will address additional technology needs in the office as funds are made available.

2. Attach an itemized spreadsheet (see template) outlining ALL revenues/resources generated and expenses incurred (including salaries) for the unit for the past 3 years.

The Advising Center budget is determined by the university, including salaries, and is not fee based.

Opportunity Analysis

How can programs or services offered by the unit be enhanced?

Automate declaration of major form.

Create automated assessment/surveys (i.e “rate your advisor”).

Continue development of Advising Day as an important University event.

Address issues with academic department participation in summer orientation sessions, faculty advising, etc.

Close the gap in time and/or develop better sequencing of information given to students between attendance at orientation and first day of class, i.e. explore additional opportunities for developmental/transition advising at start of term.

Better partnering with transition courses to provide information on academic advising.

Continue to refine and enhance liaison roles with colleges/departments.

Offer more training to faculty advisors and staff in departmental offices.

Continue to develop support for the role of the Director Undergraduate Advising as a campus resource, i.e. include in Dean and/or Associate Dean meetings.

2. How do the activities of other units advance or hinder the effectiveness of your unit?

Focus should be on those units that were identified in item #3 in the section on “Demand for the Program”.

Units we collaborate effectively with and whose activities support the Advising Center include; Student Support Services, Honors College including pre-professional programs advising, TRACS, Orientation, Career Services, the Catamount Academic Tutoring Center, and the Academic Success Program (ASP).

The work of the Registrar’s office is essential to our ability to perform our duties and they support us extremely well. Our working relationship with Orientation is also very positive and it is very helpful to have them located within our office suite because we collaborate on planning

Orientation events throughout the calendar year.

We have had communication issues with Athletics and the working relationship between their academic support staff and the Student Athlete Advisor in the Advising Center is not as constructive as it could be. We are working on repairing that relationship but it is currently not what we would like it to be on either side.

We have an institutional dilemma with timely completion of transcript evaluations. The volume of transcripts to be evaluated and the window within which we need them done taxes the resources of the Registrar's Office significantly. The process of how we receive transcripts can also cause problems or delays. Transcripts are received in the Admissions Office before being transferred to the Registrar for evaluation. Despite improvements in the process, there are still transcripts that get "lost in the shuffle" or sit in Admissions for extended periods of time before being discovered and sent on to the Registrar.

Some academic departments are better than others with the administrative side to the advising process. Issues for the Advising Center arise when departments do not provide registration permits or course substitutions as appropriate or when faculty advisors give students course recommendations for courses that are full or not offered in that term. There is a general feeling among Advising Center staff that some departments do not accept responsibility for their students or feel accountable for helping students track their progress to degree. Students are frequently sent to the Advising Center by faculty for Liberal Studies advising because they "don't do that". A Task Force on Advising recommended establishing advising units in each of the Colleges to address some of these problems but the recommendation was not implemented, largely due to resources not being available in the current budget climate. Since that time, the College of Education and Allied Professions has identified resources and established a pilot with the Teacher Recruitment Advising and Career Services (TRACS) office that provides the kind of services outlined in the Task Force recommendation. The advising model in the Honors College and the establishment of the Director of Undergraduate Affairs in the College of Business also represent ways elements of the Task Force recommendation could be implemented. I believe with adequate resources, this model would serve WCU well.

3. What programs and services offered by the unit are redundant or outside the scope of the unit's primary purpose?

N/A

4. What are similar units at peer or aspirant institutions doing that this unit would like to do or should be doing?

The model we would like to develop as resources allow would be to retain the Advising Center as

a centralized unit that provides academic advising to students for their first year prior to transitioning to faculty advisors in their major department. This would eventually include establishment of advising centers in each of the Colleges to facilitate the transition and provide administrative support to faculty and twelve-month access to major advisors for declared students. Among our peer and aspirant institutions, both Western Kentucky University and Radford University follow this advising model. Many of our sister institutions in the UNC system also have advising models based on this approach, including; UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Wilmington, East Carolina University, North Carolina State University, and Appalachian State University.

Advisor salaries at WCU have fallen well behind the national average hindering our ability to retain quality staff and recruit well-qualified candidates in the event of a vacancy. This inequity needs to be addressed as soon as possible to sustain the quality of work performed by the Advising Center.

The professional staff of the Advising Center and the role the Advising Center plays in support of University goals and initiatives should have higher visibility among upper-level administrators. Advising Center staff sense that the contributions of the Advising Center are not fully understood or appreciated at the higher levels. Given the quality and quantity of work we do to support our students, faculty, and staff this has a detrimental effect on staff morale.

Provide more campus outreach activities; we have been moving in that direction with collaborative efforts with Residential Living but we could and should be doing more.

Providing resources for professional development opportunities; travel to attend and present at state, regional, and national conferences.

Make better use of assessment to identify areas of strength and areas of opportunity to enhance programs and services.

We would like to develop a stronger mechanism to identify academically at-risk students and provide programs to support their academic growth.

5. What additional cost-savings could be achieved in this unit?

Some cost savings could be realized by eliminating paper mailings; i.e. Catwalk letters and letters to students on academic probation or academic suspension. We currently split costs for these mailings with Orientation for the Catwalk letters, and the Registrar for probation/suspension letters.

6. What external funding opportunities (grants, contracts, etc.) exist that could be pursued

by this unit? If applicable, describe any efforts to pursue such funding to date?

No external funding sources have been identified that would support Advising Center services.

7. What would it take to make the program exemplary?

Require new freshman students to be advised in the Advising Center for their first year before transitioning to the academic departments and new transfer students for at least their first full semester. This would better enable us to teach students the self-management skills we believe are necessary for them to be successful members of the WCU community of scholarship and eliminate unnecessary confusion on the part of students, parents, and faculty and staff.

A dedicated IT person with intermediate to advanced knowledge of Banner, MS Access, SQL, ASP.net, Visual Studio, Flash, and web-based applications (RedDot and HTML beyond content modification) for reporting, program, and communication support.

Additional office space would be a big help. We have begun working with the College Student Personnel Program to provide the opportunity for a graduate student enrolled in the program interested in academic advising to serve as a Graduate Assistant in the Advising Center. We also work with the Director of the Academic Success Program to provide space for the Graduate Assistant and/or student assistants working to support that program. We only have one office available for their shared use and juggling schedules to allow them independent use of the office when needed, student appointments for example, has become a significant problem.

More opportunities and funding for professional development, i.e. travel to attend and present at state, regional, and national conferences.