

Faculty Advising and Mentoring



**TIDEWATER
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

From here, go anywhere.™

Contents

- INTRODUCTION: 3
- RATIONALE: 3
- LITERATURE REVIEW: 5
- THE PROCESS: 6
 - Overview: 6
 - The Role of Student Mentees: 7
 - The Role of Counselors: 7
 - The Role of Faculty Mentors: 7
 - Pilot Programs: 8
 - Criteria: 8
 - Recruitment: 9
- ADVISOR TRAINING: 9
- PROGRAM ASSESSMENT: 9
- CONCLUSION: 10
- REFERENCES: 11

Faculty Advising and Mentoring

INTRODUCTION:

“Advising is an opportunity to teach our students crucial planning skills that will be invaluable beyond the student’s academic career.”(NOVA QEP, p.3) This proposal originated from the NOVA model of faculty advising, which is based on their current “Achieve the Dream” Grant. This model focuses on the benefits of increased student/faculty relationships, mentorship by faculty in the student’s chosen major after their first year, and the potential impact that this guidance and advice will have on student success. Our proposal includes a template for recruiting interested faculty, training faculty volunteers, and a potential timeline for implementation. Desired outcomes include: increased retention and student engagement, increased graduation rates, increased transfer rates, increased job readiness skills, and a more informed student as related to the world of work. This is based on the assumption that there is a direct correlation between education, academic preparation, and career goal development.

RATIONALE:

Emphasis on faculty in a mentoring role is not a novel concept, as best practices based on the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) have noted. We have chosen a proactive approach that focuses not only on the student’s academic preparation, but the personal development of the student as well. Hopefully, as a result of this mentoring experience, students will develop and/or refine personal goals and enhance their knowledge, skills, and understanding in order to make informed educational, social, and career decisions.

Discovering one’s interests, skills, values, and abilities are crucial career development tools that take time to master, and are best achieved through a mentoring experience with individuals who happen to be the student’s faculty. Understanding how to deal with barriers and challenges, developing self-confidence, personal enrichment, and identifying various resources for and pathways towards goals are a few of the many desired outcomes of such a faculty mentoring relationship.

Our faculty mentoring program seeks to redefine faculty advising such that we transform it from a mechanical class scheduling/course selection process into a more comprehensive model where “advising as teaching” becomes the central focus. The role the faculty plays in the process is a critical service. Inadequate academic advising has emerged as one of the strongest negative factors in student retention. Faculty advising has a strong positive correlation with student

retention. Key points include a stronger connection to the institution, student satisfaction, and increasing student retention and student engagement based on several key factors and realities such as: course sequencing, prerequisites, complexity of graduation requirements, and the degree to which an advisor must approve a variety of transactions such as clearing student groups. The benefits of an early connection with faculty in one's major have been recognized nationally for some time. These benefits include the following:

- Connecting faculty and students through reflective discussion in the student's area of study.
- Developing critical thinking skills.
- Improving organizational skills, academic planning and preparation.
- Creating opportunities for engaging students through collaborative learning.
- Learning firsthand what the day-to-day work experiences entail from those currently in their desired fields.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

As described in the CAS Standards and Guidelines for Academic Advising Programs, “the primary purpose of Academic Advising Programs (AAP) is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans” (CAS 2005 p.3).

While much of the prevailing research focuses on the role and significance of advising, many of those approaches also address the importance of mentoring. The mentoring relationship that is born out of academic advising is the single most important relationship offered to students by an institution of higher education. Through this relationship, students will engage in a critical narrative process giving shape and meaning to their curricular and life choices. (McGillan, 2003, p.88). Tinto (1993), a national leader in retention research of college students, emphasizes the importance of student-faculty interaction outside the classroom and the positive influence that it can have on student development of critical decision making skills, student satisfaction and student persistence.

There is a trend toward what Pardee (2004) describes as an ideal shared structure which takes advantage of expertise of departmental faculty advising while relying on professional advisors in central administrative units to meet the special needs of students.

Post-secondary institutions most often use either a faculty-only or counselor/advisor-only model of academic advising. Kuhn notes that there is a trend away from these models at community colleges, recognizing that effective undergraduate education requires academic affairs and student affairs to work together to deliver an education that reflects how the student learns. King (2008) explains that there is a need for both academic and student affairs to unite and work together to provide quality academic advising (Kuhn 2008).

Given the complexity of academic advising, it is unrealistic to expect any one entity to adequately address every concern. It is also important that there be sufficient resources available to address students’ advising needs in a timely manner and to accomplish the mission and goals of the advising program. Sharing the advising responsibilities makes this a more feasible process. (CAS Standards, 2011 p. 248).

It should be noted however that research by Upcraft, Gardner & Barefoot (2005) highlight several sobering realities: “As the institution looks at the role faculty should and will play, it is important to consider faculty interest in advising, their awareness of existing problems, and their willingness to address these problems and accept training. Faculty interest and willingness may be affected by other responsibilities, how the administration values advising, and the reward for good advising.” In institutions where all faculty were required to advise, varying degrees of commitment were noted, resulting in inconsistent advising quality.

This proposal is based on a voluntary model where participation and commitment is encouraged but not mandated. It is directly aligned with the faculty evaluation process and promotional opportunities, recognizing that a positive correlation exists between demonstration of initiative, innovation and institutional commitment to overt recognition and reward for those acts. Upcraft, Gardner & Barefoot (2005) offers the following observation: “Other than consideration in promotion and tenure decisions, the most frequent methods that colleges and universities use to provide recognition and reward for both faculty and professional advisors are release time, support for travel to conferences, annual campus rewards and external recognition.”

In summary, Pascarella (1980) suggests that there is a positive correlation between student-faculty interaction outside the classroom and the various student outcome measures such as academic achievement, positive views of their college experience, personal and intellectual growth and development, engagement and persistence. “Significant positive associations exist between extent and quality of student-faculty informal contact and students’ educational aspirations, their attitudes toward college, their academic achievement, intellectual and personal development, and their institutional persistence.” This author maintains that students’ perceptions of “warm” and “informal” relationships with faculty increase their level of educational aspirations, hope and persistence. Student-faculty interaction outside the classroom seems to have a positive correlation to student satisfaction with the college experience more so than any other student or institutional characteristic.

THE PROCESS:

Since faculty play such an integral role in academic advising, it is imperative that all constituents work together to assure that faculty have the information, tools and resources to effectively engage in the advising process.

Overview:

This model focuses on students learning the processes needed to complete their educational goals at Tidewater Community College. It follows a shared governance model to advising based on a holistic approach to student success, and provides faculty an opportunity to satisfy their institutional responsibility requirement. Students will be eligible to participate in the faculty advising/mentoring program with a full-time faculty member, ideally, specific to their curriculum.

Key components of an effective faculty advising and mentoring program include the following:

- A clear definition and common understanding of what faculty advising and mentoring entails.
- Systematic and ongoing training for faculty.

- A system that is evaluated regularly for clarity of goals, and specific measurable outcomes, as well as a willingness to modify as deemed necessary for the overall success of the program.
- Faculty who participate may receive recognition and rewards for their efforts such as release time, support for professional development, etc.
- A designated individual or working committee to coordinate the program, who will receive release time to do so.

The advising team will be composed of counselors, CMVE advisors, faculty volunteers, academic dean volunteers, and student ambassadors. All stake holders will be cross-trained in advising, student success theories and best practices. Faculty will receive technological support and training, opportunities to participate in additional training throughout the semester to hone their advising skills if needed. All students intending to transfer will continue to work with the transfer counselors for advising and academic planning.

The Role of Student Mentees:

- Establish a relationship with the faculty mentor during the registration period that will continue through their time at TCC.
- Develop academic goals and a program completion plan with the assistance of the faculty mentor.
- Periodically meet with the faculty mentor to evaluate their academic plan, as well as participate in the process of achieving the established mentoring goals described above.

The Role of Counselors:

- Counselors and advisors will be assigned a curricula, will partner with faculty advisors/mentors within the assigned curricula, and maintain that collaborative relationship through degree completion.

The Role of Faculty Mentors:

- Proactively establish a relationship with the student mentee that encompasses academic, career and professional advising. The faculty-advisor/mentor will be the first point of contact for academic advising and class selection after the First Year Experience is completed.
- Assist the student in the evaluation of their academic performance, helping to instill traits such as self-accountability, follow through and persistence.
- Assist students in the development of an academic plan to ensure program completion.
- Faculty-advising/mentorship will occur prior to the beginning of registration, at the mid-term point and after classes have ended to assess course completion of the current semester and plan for the upcoming semester.

- Faculty advisors/mentors will be available to students via appointment during office hours, as well as at designated times and locations during the advising and registration period.

Recognizing the need to document attainment of established advisement outcomes, a system will be implemented, perhaps using Blackboard, where both advisors and advisees can review established goals and progress made towards attainment of these goals. This will serve to further cement the mentoring relationship. Setting measurable outcomes will sharpen the college’s focus on providing a program that produces direct measurable benefits to our students.

Pilot Programs:

Full-time faculty advising/mentorship will be offered as a pilot with certain applied science curriculums and certificate programs. They have been selected by the committee and are as follows:

Campus	Curriculum
Chesapeake	Administration of Justice, Early Childhood & Human Services
Norfolk	Culinary Arts, Early Childhood & Human Services
Portsmouth	Nursing, Welding & Visual Arts
Virginia Beach	Information Systems Technology, Paralegal, Early Childhood & Health Professions

Criteria:

In order to provide the best mentoring experience for our students, it is important to have uniform expectations for participating faculty; therefore, the following criteria has been established:

- Must be full-time faculty.
- Must be appointed to at least the second year of the current one year contract.
- Must have successfully met evaluation expectations for their previous evaluation period.
- Must have a willingness to participate in an extensive training process.
- Must commit to maintaining required advising hours.
- Must participate with the Faculty Mentoring program for at minimum of two years.

Recruitment:

Recruitment will begin by soliciting volunteers from the participating programs, initially those which have agreed to participate in the pilot. The following recruitment process will be used to select the mentors from among the volunteers:

- Interested faculty will complete an application to be reviewed by the selection committee.
- Applications will be available March 1st through April 1st each academic year.
- Mentoring appointments begin each fall semester for a two consecutive year term.
- The selection committee will be comprised of a faculty peer appointed by the campus Faculty Senate, counselor appointed by the campus Dean of Student Services, and a student representative appointed by the campus student SGA.
- This recruitment process outlined above would be repeated on an ongoing basis upon successful completion of the pilot and final approval by the college-wide faculty senate.

ADVISOR TRAINING:

This proposal supports the premise that faculty advising and mentoring is much more than course selection. It is a complex process that requires extensive knowledge of the respective curricula, strong interpersonal skills, and motivation to establish and maintain a relationship with our students outside the classroom. Since faculty will play such an integral role in academic advising, it is imperative that they have the information, tools and resources to effectively engage in the advising and mentoring process. Intended outcomes for the advisor training program will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Gain a thorough understanding of college policies and procedures relevant to advising.
- Obtain a thorough knowledge of their program's curriculum and degree requirements.
- Identify student needs that may be potential inhibitors to their academic success.
- Acquire a working knowledge of the appropriate resources for additional support including necessary referrals.
- Assist their students in a review of their academic history and development of a comprehensive success plan.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT:

Ongoing assessment of the program will be completed annually through the use of surveys to solicit feedback from program participants (mentors and mentees) to determine whether student expectations are being met and the training provided to the faculty mentors adequately prepared them for their role. The specific assessment criteria will be developed by the pilot program participants and those charged with program oversight. These criteria may include, but are not

limited to, the following areas:

- Efficacy of the training program in preparing mentors to identify and meet student's academic, professional, and personal needs.
- Suggested areas for improvement to the training program going forward.
- Student feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of the mentor-mentee relationship.

CONCLUSION:

The introduction of faculty mentoring is a positive step toward ensuring students have access to all available resources in order to maximize their potential while attending TCC. Analysis of comprehensive data shows that the current proposal brings TCC into alignment not only with other VCCS institutions, but also with leading colleges and universities nationally. Our research supports the premise that the most effective model of student-faculty mentoring relationships at TCC would be a shared model reflecting collaboration between students, student services, and faculty. Variations of such a model are informally in place at our campuses presently; however, realignment of current practices to a common model which emphasizes early and continual engagement with a mentor will improve students' overall success.

Respectfully submitted by the 2014-15 Student Success Governance Committee.

Revision: 5/14/15

REFERENCES:

- **Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2006). *College learning for the new global century*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- **Campbell, S. M. (2008). Vision, mission, goals, and program objectives for academic advising programs. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed.) (pp. 229-241). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- **Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). (2005). Academic advising programs: CAS standards and guidelines. Retrieved April 8, 2010 from <http://www.cas.edu/getpdf.cfm?PDF=E864D2C4-D6558F74-2E647CDECD29B7D0>
- **Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2006, 2009). CAS professional standards for higher education, (6th and 7th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- **Habley, W. R. (Ed.). (2004). *The status of academic advising: Findings from the ACT Sixth National Survey*. (NACADA Monograph Series, no. 10) Manhattan, KS: National Academic Advising Association.
- **King, M. C. (2008). Organization of academic advising services. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed.) (pp. 242-252). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- **Kuhn, T. L. (2008). Historical foundations of academic advising. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed.) (pp. 3-16). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- **McGillan, V. A. (2003). The role of evaluation and reward in faculty advising. In G. Kramer (ed.), *Faculty advising examined: Enhancing the potential of college faculty as advisors* (pp. 88-124). Bolton, MA: Anker.
- **M. L. Upcraft, J. Gardner, & B. Barefoot (2005). *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student : A Handbook for Improving the First Year of College*; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- **National Academic Advising Association. (2006). NACADA concept of academic advising. Retrieved April 19, 2011 from the NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources Web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Concept-Advising.htm>
- **Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), Quality Enhancement Plan (2012). GPS for Success: Teaching and learning through Academic Advisement.
- **O'Banion, T. (1972). An academic advising model. *Junior College Journal*, 42(6), 62-69. Reprinted (1994). *NACADA Journal*, 14(2), 10-16.

**Pardee, C. F. (2004). Organizational structures for advising. Retrieved January 25, 2011 from the NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Web site:
http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/org_models.htm

**Pascarella, E. T., Terenzini, P. T. (1980). Patterns of student-faculty informal interaction beyond the classroom and voluntary freshman attrition. *Journal of Higher Education*, 48(5), 540-552.

**Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.