

Undergraduate Advising at UC Santa Cruz: an Assessment and Recommendations

Report of the Advising Task Force

February, 2018

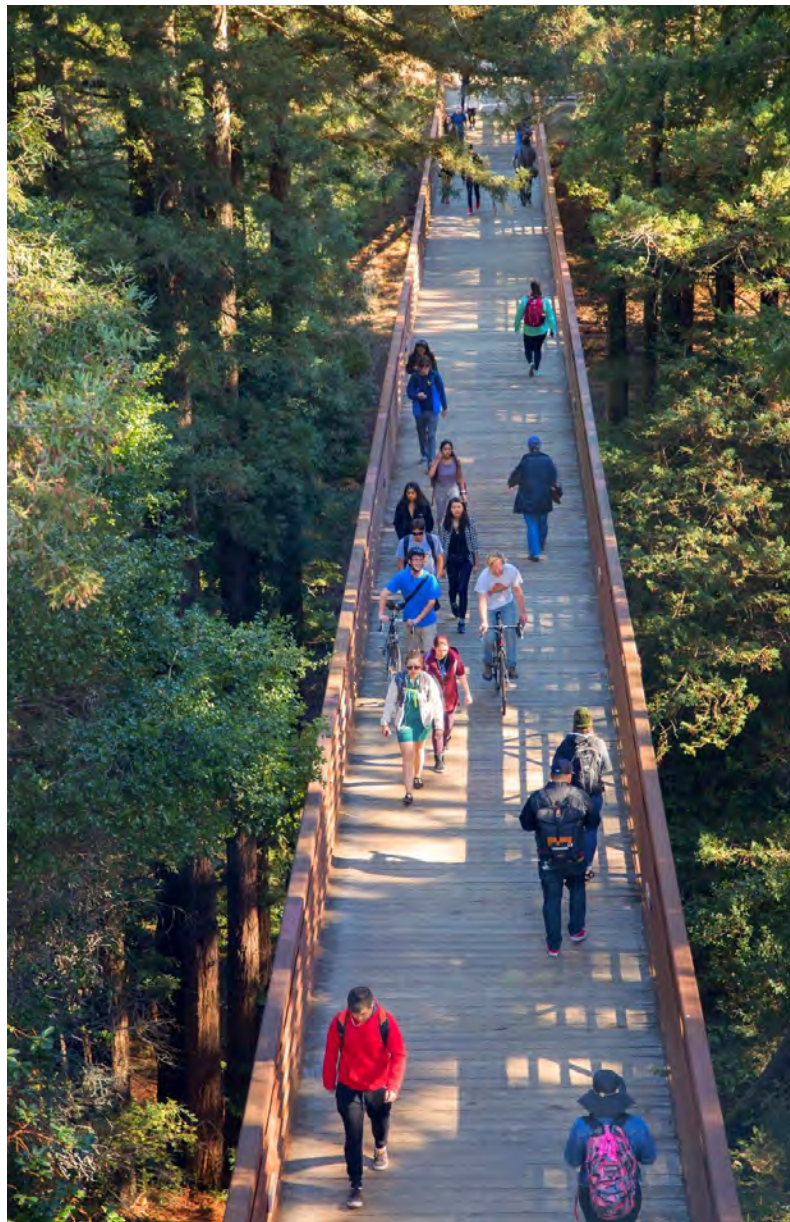


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1. About the Advising Task Force (ATF)

In August 2015, then Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Alison Galloway created an Advising Task Force. Its charge was to “review and assess UCSC student advising... and recommend steps the campus needs to take over the next three years to accomplish the Task Force’s recommendations”. The focus of the task force’s work was on undergraduate advising.

Why review advising? The campus context has been changing in ways that can bear on the effectiveness of advising. Undergraduate enrollment has grown dramatically over the last 20 years even as the number of advisors has remained roughly the same. And our students have changed: roughly two thirds of our student body consists of students who are underrepresented, low-income, and/or first-generation. Our EOP student population has grown to approximately 35% of the undergraduate population. These students especially benefit from more, and more holistic, support. At the same time, the university budget has become more constrained and we have fewer staff than we did in 2008. As for a more positive reason, UC Santa Cruz has invested in [Slug Success](#), an enterprise system with functionality that benefits advisors as well as students; implementation of Slug Success provides an opportunity to think afresh about how we structure and offer advising and about advising processes. Finally, advising is central to student success; it behooves us to give it this attention on a regular basis.

It is worth relating aspects of the Advising Task Force charge more fully:

- 1) Consider options to our current advising practices that:
 - a) Are responsive to the underlying causes of attrition or increased time to degree, either academic or personal.
 - b) Ensure students receive consistent, actionable direction independent of the campus source of that information.
 - c) Address the issues of advisor time and support resources being spread thin.
 - d) Take optimal advantage of the predictive analytics, communications, and reporting/decision-support tools that are part of our [Slug Success] contract.
- 2) Review and assess the current state of all student advising at UC Santa Cruz; identify areas of advising effectiveness or gaps; and point out areas where there are overlapping responsibilities, unclear roles, etc.
- 3) Recommend ways in which the campus’ existing advising resources can be directed to maximize student success, to create accountability, and to provide personalized intervention. Your recommendations should be mindful of constrained resources.

It will be critical to identify where advising services can be restructured in cost-effective ways that still best serve our students.

- 4) Identify any advising-related policy issues that should be considered by appropriate campus groups.

To accomplish this work, the Advising Task Force met roughly every three weeks for the entire 2015-16 academic year; members often worked on substantive projects outside of meeting times as well. The following sections describe advising as it exists today and lay out a range of recommendations in response to the above charge. The core focus of our recommendations relates to *academic* advising—the advising done by college and departmental (program) advisors. However, they do touch on other kinds of advising too, e.g. Career Center and Educational Opportunities Program advising.

The Advising Task Force

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Manel Camps	Provost of Crown College and Professor of Microbiology & Environmental Toxicology
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Jaye Padgett (Chair)	Vice Provost for Student Success and Professor of Linguistics
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Monique Vairo	Undergraduate Advising Coordinator, Baskin School of Engineering

2. Unifying Themes and Top Recommendations

This report includes 52 recommendations of the Advising Task Force; these appear throughout this report and are listed together in an appendix. We think all of these recommendations are worthwhile, but they are also the trees that could hide the forest. This Section is meant to draw attention to some of the larger themes that emerged from our work, as well as to highlight 15 recommendations that were identified by the Task Force as high priorities.

Effective advising is a cornerstone of student success. If there is one theme that unifies all of this report, it is that we must free up and support advisors to do the work that most benefits student success. In terms of a taxonomy explained in Section 3, advisors need more time and support to be effective *developmental* advisors. We must free them up from too much time spent on *informational* and *prescriptive* advising, not to mention many other tasks. Doing this requires diverse approaches, including a more strategic delivery of advising; improvements in policies and processes; new tools and technology; resources to allow students to self-advise; more support for training and professional development; and some organizational change, to name some.

Our top-priority recommendations fall into several broad categories. For more information about these recommendations, see the relevant sections (indicated by the first portion of each recommendation number).

Improve Advising Coordination

Recommendation 6.3

Establish an Advising Council and charge it with oversight and management of advising processes and policies.

Recommendation 8.5

Divisions should create well-compensated Divisional Lead Advisor positions.

- Establish dotted reporting lines from departmental advisors to these positions
- Establish dotted reporting lines from these positions to the Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Advising

Recommendation 8.6

Create a new Programs Advising Coordinator position similar to the Colleges Advising Coordinator position.

Simplify Processes and Enhance Self-Advising Tools

Recommendation 7.1

Create a “one-stop”, authoritative advising website for students.

Recommendation 7.2

Re-design the online catalog to be standardized, authoritative, user-friendly, and searchable. Until this happens,

- Create a catalog template that programs are expected to use.
- Create a web template for program-level advising pages.

Recommendation 9.1

Make the major qualification, declaration, and appeals policies and processes simple and uniform for all programs.

Recommendation 9.2

Create online major declaration tools for all academic programs.

Increase Capacity

Recommendation 5.6

House EOP counselors in the colleges, while maintaining the administrative integrity, supervision, leadership, and mission of EOP.

Recommendation 5.7

Hire sufficient EOP counselors to house one in each of the ten colleges.

Recommendation 6.2

Preserve the two college advisors presently on temporary funding in UE, and bring the 9/10 advising office up to five advisors.

Recommendation 9.4

Acquire and implement a tool for creating and revising academic plans.

Recommendation 9.6

Refine and improve processes surrounding waitlists, classroom scheduling, and waitlist metrics to ensure the most effective use of classroom capacity across the curriculum.

Provide Professional Development

Recommendation 10.1

Establish campus-wide training programs for all advisors.

Recommendation 10.4

Guarantee funding for the external professional development of all advisors, and put in place expectations for seeking both internal and external professional development.

Track Results

Recommendation 4.1

Develop metrics by which to assess student achievement of learning outcomes related to advising, including career readiness; track those metrics and use them to inform advising and decision making.

3. Advising at UC Santa Cruz

The charge of the Advising Task Force (ATF) included elucidating the distinct roles of different kinds of advisors and making recommendations about those roles. College and departmental advisors comprise all of the core professional *academic* advisors, as traditionally conceived. However, there are many other campus staff who advise undergraduate students, whether that advising is “academic” (not a completely well-defined term) or supports a student’s academic success in some other way. Because undergraduate advising, *broadly construed*, happens in many places, including those shown below, we did not want to limit our thinking to the college and departmental advisors.

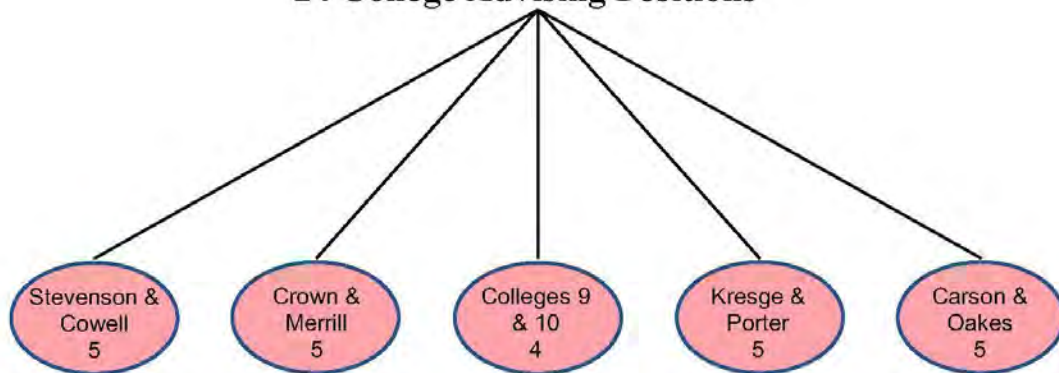
- College advisors
- Departmental advisors
- Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) counselors
- Career Center coaches
- Faculty
- Peer advisors

Students are also advised in [Global Engagement \(Study Abroad and International Student and Scholar Services\)](#), the [Office of the Registrar](#), the [Financial Aid and Scholarships Office](#), the [Services for Transfer and Re-Entry Students office](#), the [Disability Resource Center](#), the [Resource Centers](#), and informally in many other settings. In considering advising at UC Santa Cruz, the ATF decided to focus on advisors in the bullets above. This was a matter both of making the job manageable and of focusing on areas most central to academic advising. In what follows, we briefly introduce these kinds of advising. (We address faculty and peer advising separately in Sections [10](#) and [11](#).)

College and Departmental Advisors

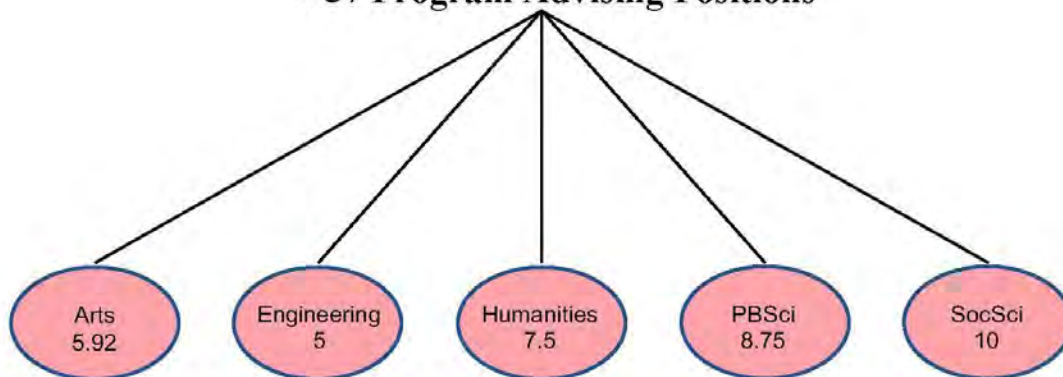
While some universities have centralized advising offices, the core academic advising at UC Santa Cruz is distributed among the colleges and academic programs. There are currently 2.5 advising positions per college, with an advising position shared between college pairs such as Stevenson and Cowell, as shown below. The exception is Colleges 9 and 10, which have four advising positions between them. There are 24 college advising positions overall, though two of those positions are not permanently funded.

24 College Advising Positions



As for program advisors, as of Winter 2018 the positions were distributed across divisions as shown below. These numbers should be understood with caution: some staff in departments and divisions combine advising duties with other duties, a point we return to in Section 6. Some staff who do provide advising are not counted here because they are not primarily advisors, and some advisors counted here have significant job duties outside of advising.

~ 37 Program Advising Positions



Program advisors are housed in academic departments except in the School of Engineering, which has a centralized advising office staffed by all five of its advisors. This had been the model in Physical and Biological Sciences for some years too, but as of 2016-17 that division's advising positions have returned to the departments. Henceforth we refer to all academic program advisors as "departmental advisors".

The UC Santa Cruz Undergraduate Advising website of the Division of Undergraduate Education's Office of Campus Advising Coordination provides the following mission and goals statement for academic advising:¹

The primary purpose of undergraduate academic advising is to assist students in clarifying their educational goals and in developing academic plans to achieve them at UCSC.

¹ From "Undergraduate Academic Advising Mission", <http://advising.ucsc.edu/about/mission/index.html>.

As part of the educational mission of the university, the academic advising program should enable students to become self-directed learners and responsible decision-makers and encourage them to take advantage of available educational opportunities both within the formal curriculum and beyond it.

Goals

The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about educational plans and life goals rests with individual students. The university should assist them by:

1. Providing opportunities to clarify their career and life goals and assess their academic strengths and challenges.
2. Providing accurate and relevant information about academic programs and other educational experiences available to them.
3. Informing them of institutional requirements and interpreting institutional policies and procedures relevant to their success.
4. Monitoring their progress toward completion of their academic plans and compliance with institutional expectations of academic standing and progress.
5. Encouraging use of institutional and community services in support of academic success.

Academic advising approaches the mission and goals above while engaging with students on (ideally) three levels: the informational, the prescriptive, and the developmental. As the names suggest, the first two are about imparting information and helping to ensure that students follow requirements and policies. Developmental advising goes beyond these transactional interactions, with the advisor encouraging and empowering students to, for example, improve their study skills, explore program options, broaden their interests, clarify their values, set career and life goals, etc.²

The Undergraduate Advising website also provides student [learning outcomes](#) for each year of study. For example, one learning outcome for frosh is to propose a major by the end of the year, while one for juniors is to “identify potential graduate school and/or career opportunities and learn how to prepare for those opportunities.”

² See discussion at <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Developmental-advising-definitions.aspx>, and especially Creamer, D. G. & Creamer, E. G. (1994). Practicing Developmental Advising: Theoretical Contexts and Functional Applications. NACADA Journal 14(2), 17-24.

Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) Counselors

The [Educational Opportunity Programs](#) (EOP) office provides a variety of academic and personal support programs to promote the retention, academic success, and graduation of first generation, low-income, and educationally disadvantaged students.

EOP counseling is intentionally developmental and holistic, delving into non-academic as well as academic issues. EOP services include orientation, academic and personal advising, peer advising, tutorial assistance, financial literacy education/budgeting, and preparation for graduate and professional schools. EOP counselors also coordinate student programs (e.g., Bridge First Year Experience Program, Undocumented Student Services). Each EOP counselor is assigned to 2-3 colleges and participates in academic standing review/case consultation with college and departmental advisors.

As of Fall 2017, roughly 35% or 6,221 undergraduate students at UC Santa Cruz are EOP-eligible.

Career Center Coaches

The [Career Center](#) supports students in major selection, professional development, and career preparation and placement. Career Center coaches advise on career options and career goals, internships and employment opportunities, applying to graduate and professional schools, creating resumes, interviewing skills, targeting the job search, networking to tap the hidden job market, etc. The Career Center also offers services such as personality assessments for major and career exploration, job and internship search databases, workshops on various topics, job fairs, a Multicultural Career Conference, and the Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program. The Career Center collaborates with Alumni Engagement to provide the Career Advice Network and programming that brings students and alumni together for career development conversations. Each Career coach is assigned as liaison to 2-3 colleges, multiple divisions, units, and programs (such as EOP and the Resource Centers) to facilitate coordination, collaboration, and information sharing. Finally, the Career Center administers student hiring at UC Santa Cruz.

4. Perceptions and Assessment of Advising

The Advising Task Force reviewed various reports analyzing recent surveys that touched on advising.

The University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) is administered to undergraduates across the UC system every two years. UCUES includes questions about student satisfaction with advising, focusing on juniors and seniors. The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Policy Studies (IRAPS) analyzed the responses to these questions by disciplinary division.³

On our campus, 50% of students report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with advising by department staff, or faculty (2016 UCUES). Satisfaction with college advisors is somewhat lower, with 44% of students reporting being “satisfied” or “very satisfied.” On average, students report being “somewhat satisfied” with each type of advising, in the range of 4.1-4.3 on a 6-point scale. The figures are similar to the UC system overall.

Table 1 shows the percentage of upper-division students who are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with advising by department staff for the period 2008-2016, broken down by division. Tables 2 and 3 do the same for advising by faculty and by college advisors respectively.

Table 1: Satisfaction with advising by department staff, upper-division students

	2016		2014		2012		2010		2008		% Change 2008-2016
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
<i>% Satisfied or Very Satisfied</i>											
Arts	153	57%	125	57%	93	65%	94	64%	141	55%	2%
Humanities	282	71%	224	72%	277	70%	222	73%	332	65%	6%
PBSci	367	41%	262	37%	274	44%	191	44%	292	47%	-6%
Social Sciences	699	58%	633	54%	559	58%	433	53%	611	59%	-1%
SOE	249	41%	116	42%	98	50%	56	46%	45	56%	-15%

³ “Student Satisfaction with Advising in the Arts Division 2008-2016” (and analogous titles for the other four divisions), Institutional Research, Assessment, and Policy Studies, UC Santa Cruz.

Table 2: Satisfaction with advising by faculty, upper-division students

	2016		2014		2012		2010		2008		% Change 2008-2016
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
Arts	149	55%	140	63%	98	68%	99	66%	153	59%	-4%
Humanities	269	68%	217	68%	282	71%	200	66%	330	65%	3%
PBSci	383	43%	301	42%	302	49%	190	44%	287	47%	-4%
Social Sciences	642	53%	658	55%	583	60%	451	55%	557	54%	-1%
SOE	224	37%	119	43%	100	50%	47	39%	44	56%	-19%

Table 3: Satisfaction with advising by college advisors, upper-division students

	2016		2014		2012		2010		2008		% Change 2008-2016
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
Arts	129	47%	91	42%	66	47%	70	46%	106	41%	6%
Humanities	212	53%	185	59%	218	56%	161	53%	249	49%	4%
PBSci	340	38%	265	37%	244	39%	145	34%	223	36%	2%
Social Sciences	601	50%	596	50%	504	52%	382	46%	483	47%	3%
SOE	222	37%	103	37%	90	45%	46	38%	38	48%	-11%

Several observations can be made from these tables. First, overall students in Humanities are most satisfied with advising by any kind of advisor, while students in STEM areas are least satisfied. We assume that these differences are not about the competency of advisors but rather arise from factors like the size and complexity of majors, impactation, the organization of advising (centralized vs. not), different advising policies, etc.; see, for example, the bullet points below. Major-specific analysis shows substantial variations in student satisfaction within every division.⁴

⁴See five division-specific reports on student satisfaction with advising based on 2014 UCUES here: <https://iraps.ucsc.edu/surveys/uc-undergraduate-experience-survey.html>

Second, students are less satisfied with advising by college advisors. Again we assume this is due to factors beyond the control of individual advisors, and note that the majority of students meet with college advisors during their upper-division years of study almost as frequently as sophomores. The 2016 UCUES results show that 72% of upper-division students met with college advisors at least once compared to 80% of frosh and 76% of sophomores. More of upper-division students met with major staff advisors (86%) than with college advisors (72%) at least once, but about 50% of upper-division students met 1-2 times with either college advisor or major advisor or both (the same frequency).

Finally, satisfaction with advising declined significantly in STEM areas over this period, for all kinds of advising except college advising of PBSci majors. Whether these declines are related to increased enrollments and impaction or other factors is hard to say, but the largest change is with the division, Engineering, that has seen the largest growth over the past several years.

Our analysis of 2014 and 2016 UCUES also found that student dissatisfaction with department and faculty advising is moderately correlated with the following factors:

- student dissatisfaction with the perceived availability of courses needed for graduation,
- their perception that a program's requirements are not well-defined,
- their perception that a department's rules and policies are not clearly communicated,
- their lack of understanding how major requirements combine to produce a coherent understanding of a field of study,
- dissatisfaction with their overall academic experience, and
- a high student-advisor ratio in only one division, Arts, where the students in departments with higher student-advisor ratio were less satisfied (only examined with 2014 UCUES data and did not include School of Engineering).
- For all five disciplinary divisions, dissatisfaction with department and faculty advising is moderately correlated with dissatisfaction with availability of courses needed for graduation.
- For all five disciplinary divisions, dissatisfaction with department and faculty advising is moderately correlated with the perception that a program's requirements are not well-defined.
- For all five disciplinary divisions, dissatisfaction with department and faculty advising is moderately correlated with the perception that a department's rules and policies are not clearly communicated.

- For all five disciplinary divisions, dissatisfaction with department (usually) and faculty advising is moderately correlated with a lack of understanding of how major requirements combine to produce a coherent understanding of a field of study.
- For all five disciplinary divisions, dissatisfaction with department and faculty advising is moderately correlated with dissatisfaction with a student's overall academic experience.

Taken together, these findings suggest that student satisfaction with advising depends in a statistically significant way on many things besides the quality of advising per se, and in particular that much depends on things like course availability, the transparency and coherence of major requirements and policies, and the student's "overall academic experience". Some of this is addressed in sections below. On the other hand, it is interesting that a student's academic success (as measured by GPA) and the student-advisor ratio did not systematically affect satisfaction with advising.

A recent 2017 report by IRAPS analyzed students' sources of career advice.⁵ Based on the UCSC First Destination Survey of graduates, this analysis found that as many as one in two students talked to UCSC instructors and faculty advisors about career plans. At the same time, a third of graduates have *never* discussed their career plans with an UCSC faculty or staff advisor, including major advisors and Career Center coaches. Also, first generation students were less likely to discuss their career plans with instructors/faculty advisors but as likely as their peers to discuss their careers with staff advisors *and* with people in their social networks. The analysis suggests that students need to be more systematically encouraged to discuss career plans with faculty advisors and staff advisors.

Previous survey research by IRAPS also found that students reported getting more advice from parents and family, and other students, on selecting a major than they did from faculty and college advisors, and they valued this advice from friends and family at least as highly.⁶ The figures tell a similar story for choosing general education and major courses, for which advice from other students seems particularly influential. These findings might be welcome or not, depending on how well the advice students get from family and fellow students serves their needs. One implication of this is that if we want to influence a student's choice of major, for example, by providing them with better information than they may have about what a major is like and how it relates to possible careers, then we may need to find ways to provide this information also to a student's family.

One of IRAPS reports on advising analyzed the results of the 2012 UCUES survey, specifically experiences of students who identify as Latinx. An important

⁵ <https://iraps.ucsc.edu/surveys/survey-files/sources-of-career-advice-fds-2017-report.pdf>

⁶ "UCSC Graduation Survey 2003: Advising", Institutional Research and Policy Studies, 2004.

systematic finding of this report is that Latinx students are significantly more likely than non-Latinx White students to need, and to obtain, advising, for various purposes including deciding a major (36% vs. 20%), getting information about a major (58% vs. 44%), planning their schedule (87% vs. 74%), and others. In addition, Latinx students are significantly more likely than non-Latinx White students to face certain kinds of obstacle to their education, including difficulties with writing or math, family issues, a difficult study environment, challenges with study skills, and time management. These two systematic differences combine to mean that Latinx students need a good deal more advising/coaching support than non-Latinx White students. This difference becomes even more significant when we consider that the proportion of students who are Latinx has been steadily increasing, with 28% of undergraduates indicating Latinx identification.

Finally, it should be noted that it is widely accepted within the field of academic advising nationally that student satisfaction, while important, cannot be the sole factor used to assess the effectiveness of academic advising. Because academic advisors are often the staff who must share bad news with students (that they are not accepted to a major, that they cannot get special permission to take a class that's full, or that they have been barred or disqualified from the university are three examples), students may express dissatisfaction with advisor's work even when advisors are doing their jobs effectively. As with the assessment of teaching and learning, the assessment of academic advisings effectiveness requires a focus not just on satisfaction but on the successful completion of learning objectives.⁷ As we have noted, our campus has already articulated student [learning outcomes](#) related to advising. This leads us to our first recommendation.

Recommendation

Recommendation 4.1

Develop metrics by which to assess student achievement of learning outcomes related to advising, including career readiness advising; track those metrics and use them to inform advising and decision making.

⁷ For more on this, see <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Assessing-Student-Learning-in-Academic-Advising.aspx>.

5. Advising roles at UC Santa Cruz

Even limiting attention to the seven kinds of advisors discussed in Section 2, the existence of these many kinds of advising raises basic questions. Are the goals and functions of each kind clear? Do the goals and functions overlap, and if so, what should we make of this? Do students understand the differences and know where to go for different needs? How well coordinated is advising?

Presumably, if we have different kinds of advisors, then there is—or should be—something unique about each kind. Putting aside faculty and peer advisors for now (they are addressed in later sections), the ATF asked “what should make each of the other kinds of advising unique?”, and came to the following conclusions.

College Advisors

College advisors should be unique in supervising, approving, and enforcing college and university requirements. While other advisors may address these requirements, college advisors are the knowledge and responsible authorities in this area. This includes the following:

- College, university, and general education requirements
- Orientation to academic requirements
- Pre-major advising and planning
- Academic progress (time to declaration and degree, and minimum progress)
- Unusual course loads, withdrawal from classes or university, readmission, leaves of absence
- Academic standing and probationary supervision

Departmental Advisors

Departmental advisors should be unique in supervising, approving, and enforcing academic major and minor requirements. While other advisors may address these requirements, departmental advisors are the knowledge and responsible authorities in this area. This includes the following:

- Academic planning for major requirements (including initial placement and approval of transfer coursework for major requirements)
- Access to classes for major
- Orientation to major
- Qualification for / declaration of the major; continuation in the major
- Satisfaction of major requirements

Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) counselors

There are functions that have been particular to EOP counselors. These include, for example, the following:

- Community building for first-generation, underrepresented minority, and low-income students
- Financial literacy, planning, and budgeting
- Immigration and financial support services and counseling for undocumented students and mixed status students
- Family education: regional family conferences and navigating family communication and relationships
- EOP's Bridge First-Year Experience Program
- EOP Textbook Lending Library program and EOP Laptop Program

However, the uniqueness of EOP cannot easily be defined in terms of function. As discussed earlier, what makes EOP unique is really the students it serves and its approach to advising. EOP serves students who are thought to be at particular risk of not succeeding; these students, including many students who are the first in their families to go to college, often need more, and more holistic, attention. For these reasons, there is necessarily significant overlap between the kinds of advising and support provided by EOP and by college or departmental advisors, a point to which we return. These include areas shown below.

- Orientation to university
- Navigating the university
- Pre-major advising for undecided or undeclared students
- Choosing classes outside the major
- Major selection / exploration
- Addressing developmental and personal issues
- Academic success skills: time management, study skills, etc.
- Referral to academic and non-academic support services

Career Center Coaches

The ATF agreed that there is career-related support and advising that should probably be unique to the Career Center:

- Career / major assessments
- Resume critiques / guidance
- Career fairs and employer-student engagement
- Pre-health, pre-law, pre-professional advising

- Career search and development
- Targeted career programs for special populations (e.g. EOP, undocumented, LGBT)

However, the unique role of the Career Center is difficult to define easily because of the important role academic departments also play in career advising and support. Here are areas where the ATF sees overlap:

- Major exploration
- Career advising
- Career and graduate school workshops
- Search and coordination of undergraduate internship and research opportunities
- Graduate school exploration, preparation, and advising
- Graduate student non-academic track career advising and resources
- Student-alumni networking

There are also key ways in which college and Career Center advising intersect. Most obviously, students benefit greatly from understanding the career implications of the majors they are considering. All too often, students choose majors without good guidance about potential careers, only to seek support for career exploration when they are juniors or seniors.

Recommendations

Though the ATF saw overlap in function among all kinds of advising surveyed above, what stood out was overlap in function between EOP and college advising, on the one hand, and Career Center and departmental and college advising, on the other. A high degree of overlap in function raises questions, as noted earlier. In principle one could eliminate overlap between separate offices by making their roles more clearly distinct, but this seems untenable for both cases of overlap discussed here.

Academic Departments and the Career Center

Academic departments, including faculty, must play a role in career and post-secondary school advising. Departments and faculty are indispensable in providing a depth and range of expertise in certain fields that the Career Center cannot provide, and faculty mentors are generally key for advice about graduate programs. Furthermore, there are only four Career Center coaches at the university. Unless departments see themselves as partners in major exploration, professional development, and career exploration, many of our students will be poorly supported in these areas. Given increased expectations from students, families, employers, and politicians that we help prepare students for successful careers, this is not really an option.

Meanwhile, faculty often have limited knowledge about careers outside of their fields (or academia) that might be suitable for students in their majors. And the Career Center provides expertise and services that departments cannot provide (see above).

Given these circumstances, the deeper the collaboration between departments and the Career Center, the more students will benefit. A recent external review of the Career Center makes the same point and makes some specific recommendations that should be strongly considered. We adapt three of those recommendations as our own below.

Recommendation 5.1

All Career Center workshops should be co-sponsored by a partner outside of the Career Center - including academic departments.

Recommendation 5.2

The Career Center should further develop and expand its “Request a Workshop” program with targeted outreach to faculty, academic advisors, and student services departments such as EOP, whereby those units may ask the Career Center to partner on a program. Such programs might include modules on outcomes for particular majors.

Recommendation 5.3

Conduct annual meetings with Deans, Division and Unit Heads, and other key stakeholders to share information about Career Center innovations and student employability data.

Below are other suggestions for collaboration between academic departments and the Career Center.⁸

Recommendation 5.4

Deepen collaboration between departments and the Career Center in ways such as the following:

- **Create “maps” for each major that highlight internships and other co-curricular opportunities, career paths, etc. An example of such maps can be found [here](#), from Queen’s University at Kingston, Ontario.**
- **Better educate incoming students and students transitioning between majors about the career implications of their major choice.**
- **Provide more opportunities for consultation with alumni.**
- **Exchange information about career trends and about the career paths that our graduates take.**

⁸ See for example *Next Generation Advising: Elevating Practice for Degree Completion and Career Success*, The Advisory Board Company, Washington, D.C., 2012.

One might compare the need here to the need for collaboration between departments and University Relations: the latter provides general expertise in development and external relations, but only departments bring an understanding of their discipline and their department's needs, and in many cases, a strong connection to alumni. At UC Santa Cruz this tension is addressed by having University Relations staff in each academic Division, responsible to both the University Relations Office and the local dean's office. It is possible that the necessary cross-talk between Departments and the Career center would likewise be greatly facilitated through a more formalized connection between Career Center staff and academic divisions, as exists for University Relations staff.

Recommendation 5.5

Consider ways of formalizing the relationship between Career Center staff and the academic divisions.

For example, this could involve increasing the number of career coaches to match the five undergraduate divisions and two pre-professional areas of focus (Pre-Health, and Pre-Law), and/or creating dotted reporting lines from Career Coaches to deans or their designees in divisions.

EOP and College Advisors

The model of advising employed by EOP—intensive, proactive, and holistic—is considered a best practice for students who have been educationally disadvantaged and/or who have encountered significant adversity due to socio-economic status and lack of opportunity. A remarkable fact is that the proportion of students at UC Santa Cruz who might be described in this way has surged in the past 15 years or so. In fact, over this period the number of EOP-eligible students more than doubled—they are now more than one third of our students. For most of that time, EOP advising staffing did not grow. This has begun to change with an influx of grant support related to our campus' status as an [Hispanic Serving Institution](#). Looking below the high bar of EOP-eligibility, roughly two thirds of our undergraduate students are either first generation, low-income, underrepresented minority, or some combination of the three. Along with this change in student demographics comes the need for more and different kinds of support. This change also creates a need for all of our advising staff (not just EOP) to have the necessary preparation for serving these populations.

In light of these facts, it is worth considering a new way of deploying EOP counselors: house them in the colleges. It is already the case that each EOP counselor partners with a number of colleges for the purposes of academic review and case management. But EOP counselors are housed in a dedicated location separate from colleges (the Academic Resource Center). We see a number of potential advantages in housing EOP counselors in the colleges:

- Improved outreach to EOP students
- Better and stronger coordination and collaboration between college advisors and EOP counselors
- College advisors could learn from the specific expertise of EOP counselors, and vice versa
- First- and second-year students would have ready access to EOP support and advising in their own colleges

Yet there is also a potential pitfall in deploying EOP counselors in colleges: dilution or loss of the specific EOP mission and approach. This would be an unacceptable loss. To prevent this from happening, we believe that EOP would have to maintain its distinct existence and strong central EOP leadership and supervision. Currently, EOP counselors engage in ongoing training and case analysis/consultation as a team and it would be important to preserve these functions. In addition, EOP counselors coordinate student programs, including the EOP Peer Advisor Leaders (PALs) program, the Men of Color Initiative, the Bridge First year Experience Program, the Graduate Information Program (GIP), Pathways to Research (P2R), Undocumented Student Services, and the Crossing the Finish Line (CFL) program. Any change in EOP organization would have to ensure that these programs can continue and be run effectively.

Recommendation 5.6

House EOP counselors in the colleges, while maintaining the administrative integrity, supervision, leadership, and mission of EOP.

Even as the number of EOP-eligible students has doubled, the number of EOP counselors has remained roughly the same (not counting recent hires for dedicated new projects arising from Hispanic Serving Institution grant funding). Currently each EOP counselor collaborates with 2-3 colleges. The campus should aspire to have one EOP counselor housed in each college.

Recommendation 5.7

Hire sufficient EOP counselors to house one in each of the ten colleges.

6. Deployment and Capacity of Academic Advisors

Student-to-Advisor Ratios and Advisor Workload

During academic year 2000-01, total undergraduate enrollment was close to 11,000. It is now over 16,000, an increase of about 45%. During this time the number of academic advisors has not changed significantly, with the exception of some recent increases in the Physical and Biological Sciences and Engineering divisions.

An increase in student-to-advisor ratios of course has consequences for the quantity and quality of advising we can offer to students. If once academic advisors provided more holistic and developmental advising, even a case management approach, today there is much less room for it. Advisors report having little time to go beyond the more transactional advising—informational and prescriptive as opposed to developmental. This is not helpful to student success. It may also bear on advisor job satisfaction. In the two years preceding the meeting of the Advising Task Force, turnover in college advisors was roughly 50%. (We address other factors affecting job satisfaction in later sections.)

Of course, the university is subject to difficult budget constraints. We must consider ways apart from increased staffing to mitigate advisor workload and ensure that advisor time is spent where it is most needed. Potential solutions fall into several categories:

- Improve online self-advising resources
- Improve our ability to identify, and focus on, students who are at risk
- Deepen coordination of advising and of advising practices
- Address policies and procedures that create advising workload
- Improve training, mentoring, and professional development of advisors
- Eliminate or automate low level tasks that take up advisor time

The goal of all of these approaches is to create more space for advisors to engage in the most meaningful work that they do, focused on the students who really need it. Many of the recommendations in later sections of this report fall into one or more of the above categories.

However, we must also recognize that the student-to-advisor ratios matter, and some of the recommendations in this report directly address staffing levels.

The [National Academic Advising Association's 2011 National Survey of Academic Advising](#) recommends a 300:1 student-to-advisor ratio. It identifies a median 300:1 ratio for an institution of UC Santa Cruz's size, but also notes that advisor loads range to 600:1 for large institutions. Based on information from the 2014-15

academic year, student to advisor ratios range widely in the academic divisions and departments, from fewer than 100 students per advisor to more than 900 per advisor. In the colleges that report to Undergraduate Education (all but Colleges 9 and 10), 2014-15 ratios ranged from 589-665 students per advisor; in Colleges 9 and 10, which report to the Division of Social Sciences, ratios were about 775 students per advisor. (The ratios reported are based on a three-quarter headcount of 15,730 for 2014-15. Current headcount is already more than 17,000.)

The figures above understate student-to-advisor ratios in two ways. First, advisors spend significant time interacting with students who are not currently enrolled (students who are seeking readmission or who have been barred based on their academic performance and are working to identify avenues for successful degree completion). Time spent with these students is significant, but remains hidden when we focus on the number of enrolled students per advisor. Second, changes in student demographics mean that we have a much higher proportion of students today who need more intensive advising. (See Section [3](#).)

Two college advising positions within Undergraduate Education are currently paid on temporary funding that cannot be maintained. Loss of these two positions would further erode ratios and, because of the small number of advisors in each college, would require significant reorganization. (Simply eliminating two advisor positions would result in highly inconsistent ratios across colleges.)

For several reasons, advising ratio information can be very difficult to interpret in terms of its translation to either workload or student service. First, when considering departmental advisor caseload, should we count proposed majors or only declared majors? (Inequities in student-to-advisor ratios get even larger if we count proposed majors.) Second, in principle, students can rely on both college and departmental advisors for their entire educational career. Given that fact, if student-to-advisor ratios were roughly 600:1 in both colleges and departments, then UC Santa Cruz would arguably meet NACADA's recommended ratio of 300:1. Finally, some academic advisors (especially those in smaller departments) have other significant duties beyond advising. A survey of academic advisors done by members of the Advising Task Force found that, for many advisors, less than 50% of their time is spent on advising. The survey included the following question; some of the most common responses are reported:

Are there responsibilities that are not appropriate or that hinder an advisor's ability to serve students?

- Appeals for exception to the refund policy (college)
- High volume of student need to resolve enrollment barriers (college and department)
- Authorization of financial aid eligibility, including SAP advising/detailed plans/Withdraw/VA benefits/PTEE for financial purposes (college and some department)

- Course scheduling, preparing course approvals to go to CEP, working with faculty re: their schedules, etc. (department)
- Faculty and department assistance/support (department)
- TA assignments and turnaround (department)
- Scheduling rooms and staff for DRC exams (department)

This is not an exhaustive list, but a sample of the most common responsibilities that take time away from advising students.

Some of the duties above, along with more traditional “advising” responsibilities, are important in building advisors’ knowledge and expertise, or are well situated with advisors because their knowledge of the student experience is important in ensuring good decisions are made. Many, therefore, are appropriate for an advising position to include. Others, however, are simply tasks that fall to the advisor because there is no one else in the unit to do them. The survey thus also included the following questions, which are reported along with some of the most commonly reported responses:

What responsibilities add the most to an advisor’s position of authority or to their overall knowledge and expertise?

- Assisting students with exploration and planning of academic goals
- Major declaration supervision
- Academic standing advising
- Major/minor degree progress advising (departments)
- Orientation to the university/program
- Mentoring of peer advising
- Programming and outreach
- Sitting on program or curriculum committee (department)
- Time to degree/graduation progress advising

What responsibilities add the least to an advisor’s position of authority or to their overall knowledge and expertise?

- Appeals for exception to the refund policy (college)
- Authorization of financial aid eligibility (college)
- CEP petitions for enrollment issues (college)
- Retroactive withdraw from the University (college)
- Providing administrative support to department and faculty (department)
- TA assignments and turnaround (department)
- Scheduling rooms and staff for ADA exam accommodations DRC exams (department)

Other Issues Affecting Advisors' Capacity

Numerous advising processes need to be reviewed and improved for efficiency. This includes the following:

- Common Application
- Senior Residency waivers
- Withdrawal from a course
- Evaluation of medical withdrawal documentation and retention of medical documentation
- Readmission
- CEP Petitions
- MLC/ELWR/C1/C2 tracking and enrollment compliance
- IGETC issues and articulation of coursework

Historically, process improvement has taken place centrally in the Registrar's Office (focused on AIS, reporting and messaging processes) or the Division of Undergraduate Education's Office of Campus Advising Coordination (examples are online withdrawal process, creation of Infoview reports to support advising offices, and processes for reporting honors for commencement), or locally in individual advising offices. Ideally, process efficiencies should be developed centrally, with guidance and feedback coming directly from advisors. Although many good ideas and efficiencies are developed locally in advising offices, it can result in a wide variety of processes that are difficult for students and central units such as the Registrar and Admissions Offices to keep track of, and means that not all advising offices benefit from the good ideas that some offices implement.

We lack the ability to improve processes effectively on a campus-wide basis for four reasons. First, staff who might be able to develop efficiencies don't have the time to do so. For example, the Registrar's Office staff analysts have been unable to complete programming Academic Advisement Reports for all majors on campus or fully support the reporting and messaging processes they've created in the past due to a multitude of competing responsibilities. Similarly, a recent change to the withdrawal process by the Office of Campus Advising Coordination and the Registrar's Office took nearly a year to implement because of competing workload demands and the need to coordinate with a number of other offices. Long ago, an Assistant Registrar for Advising position was established which helped support improvements to advising processes, but the position was broadened and then eliminated over many years of budget cuts.

Second, we lack an organizational structure that allows us to effectively escalate concerns from advisors. Time-intensive tasks with low value to students remain hidden in small advising offices due to our decentralized nature. Until recently,

there was no representation from advising in groups such as the [Advisory Committee for Academic Systems](#) and AIS team leads, meaning that advising voices were not heard in the prioritization of campus-wide technical improvements. Establishing a campus-wide Advising Council, with representatives from each academic division, the colleges, the Registrar's Office and Division of Student Success, could serve to both escalate process concerns and ensure that advising offices have the training and support necessary to utilize new processes. Although a group of staff gathered in the 2016-17 academic year (with representation from divisions, colleges, Office of Campus Advising Coordination, and Registrar's office) to identify which processes can be addressed in a variety of different ways (including SSC Campus, AIS, or other platforms), ideally this work should be done on an ongoing basis by an established group.

Third, our decentralized reporting structure means that we spend a good deal of time developing buy-in from offices that would implement any new advising policies or processes. Empowering an office or group to set reasonable expectations for advising offices would help with this.

Finally, we lack campus-wide technical tools that would help with process simplification. These include a functioning Academic Advisement Report, a report to assess progress in major qualification requirements, an effective way to mass-mail students while ensuring FERPA compliance, a workflow system that would allow easy creation and implementation of campus forms, and an updated and user friendly general catalog and policy manual.

Recommendations

Since NACADA's 2011 National Survey of Academic Advising identified a median 300:1 student-to-advisor ratio for an institution of UC Santa Cruz's size, with our dual (college and departmental) advising system we should consider 600:1 as a goal. In academic departments, the percentage of time spent on advising must be taken into account in determining achievement of this ratio.

Recommendation 6.1

Ensure there is adequate staffing in each college and departmental advising office to meet student need.

- Identify the percentage of advisor workload that is dedicated to advising.
- Ensure academic advising ratio does not grow above 1:650, with a goal of 1:600.

Recommendation 6.2

Preserve the two college advisors presently on temporary funding in UE, and bring the 9/10 advising office up to five advisors.

Permanent funding for the above positions is important in ensuring that current ratios don't get even worse, and in attracting and retaining staff into these positions.

Recommendation 6.3

Establish an Advising Council and charge it with oversight and management of advising processes and policies.

An Advising Council should have representation from each disciplinary division, the colleges, the Office of Campus Advising Coordination, Student Success, and the Registrar's Office. The Council should include individuals who both hold leadership positions within their units and who are close enough to the advising function to fully address policy, procedure, and training issues. [The Advising Council at UC Berkeley](#) provides an example. This group should be represented in conversations about improvements to AIS, Slug Success, and other campus technologies that affect advising.

The Advising Council should be empowered to do the following, for policies and processes that support excellence in advising and do not fall clearly within the purview of another policy-making body:

- Evaluate processes and policies for value, compliance, and efficiency
- Escalate issues to appropriate bodies, including the Registrar and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)
- After consultation with stakeholders and key campus leaders, institute revisions to advising processes and policies that add value, address compliance and create efficiencies

Which "key campus leaders" need to be consulted for changes in policies or processes may depend on the specific matter being addressed, but in general should include the academic Deans, the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, the Vice Provost for Student Success, and the Chair of CEP. We suggest that this group meet with the Advising Council at least once a year.

Recommendation 6.4

Re-establish the Assistant Registrar for Advising position.

Re-establishing the above position would improve the quality and timeliness of central resources crucial to accurate and effective advising, such as the General Catalog and Academic Advisement Reports. This position should work with the Advising Council to ensure support of these central resources.

Recommendation 6.5

Consolidate and streamline support for course enrollment.

- **Establish coordinated campus-wide support for course enrollment.**
- **Establish universal procedures for class registration and related advising processes (i.e. issuing permission codes).**

Too much advisor time is spent resolving students' course enrollment issues. Providing enrollment support in a more consolidated way would take some of this workload out of advising, creating capacity for advising focused more on student success, while providing much-needed support to students. During the quarterly enrollment periods (from start of enrollment through second pass, and the first two weeks of each quarter), designated "enrollment centers" would provide comprehensive support. These centers would fully diagnose students' enrollment issues and resolve them on site, or reach out to the proper agency for support (e.g., Registrar, college, department, Admissions, etc.), with each agency committing staff support to this central effort.

Recommendation 6.6

Create a standard Career Tracks template for advisor positions in colleges and departments reflecting campus-wide expectations for advisors.

7. Consistency and Legibility of information

One of the goals of UC Santa Cruz advising (see Section 3) is “Providing accurate and relevant information about academic programs and other educational experiences” to students. Obviously, we do not provide all information verbally during advising sessions. We provide a great deal of informational and prescriptive advice in writing, these days largely on web sites. However, it is becoming more and more important to recognize that written information is not necessarily legible—easy to find, easy to understand—simply by virtue of being made available online. And when similar information appears in several locations, or there is no recognized authoritative locus of information, then the risk of providing inconsistent information to students—or advisors—multiplies.

These issues of consistency and legibility of information we provide to students are only becoming more pressing, for two reasons. First, with student-to-advisor ratios of 600:1 and many demands on advisor time, it is vital that we make it easy for students to *self-advise* to the extent possible. Second, our student “audience” has changed in recent decades.

Our Student Audience

One of the questions the Advising Task Force endeavored to answer early on was, What can we do to make it easy for students to self-advise? The committee defined students who self-advise as being able to independently locate and understand informational and prescriptive pieces of advising: major requirements, enrollment troubleshooting, classes that satisfy general education requirements, etc. A successful self-advising model ensures that all students are able to understand informational and prescriptive pieces of advising and can develop actionable steps from the information provided.

However, information is not context-neutral. Prior knowledge can make a substantial difference in deriving meaning from information. Non-traditional and first generation college students do not always have access to prior information or understand how the information applies to them. When sharing informational and prescriptive advice in writing, we need to keep in mind the audience is composed of a wide variety of students including traditional and nontraditional students.

Organization of Information

In 2015, the [UCSC Web Leadership Team](#) hired BarkleyREI (BREI), a marketing and web solutions company, to measure how effectively the current UC Santa Cruz digital presence supports critical communication, among other things. [Their final report](#) concluded that the hundreds of websites in the UC Santa Cruz digital landscape—many of which endeavour with the best of intentions to provide informational and prescriptive advising information—actually make it significantly harder for students to self-advise. Our many websites are managed by

diverse decentralized campus units who may have very different ideas about website navigation and design. Furthermore, the content on each website is a reflection of that unit's primary area of responsibility or expertise, which makes finding information challenging for students who don't possess an intimate working knowledge of the UC Santa Cruz organizational structure. Students are often required to navigate to and from several different interconnected UC Santa Cruz websites, all with dramatically different navigation schemes, inconsistent styling, and unpredictable element placement. When each new website, students become progressively more and more confused, and ultimately give up.

BREI's final report also noted that the UC Santa Cruz digital landscape simply has too much content, and may be our "most significant barrier to delivering consistent, high-quality content." Many websites follow an "information for everybody" model, which has resulted in an overabundance of redundant information, which is sometimes inaccurate or out of date. The delivery of too much information makes it difficult for students to find the advising information that is most important to them; multiple sources of the same information make it hard to know what content is authoritative.

A partial summary of the BREI final report can be read [here](#).

Recommendations

Recommendation 7.1

Create a "one-stop", authoritative advising website for students.

In order to address advisor workload issues and promote effective self-advising, we need online content that is

- consolidated and authoritative
- accessible and user-friendly

The creation of a "one-stop" advising website would benefit both students and academic advisors. In what follows we unpack this recommendation.

Consolidated and authoritative

The dispersal of advising information among many websites controlled by independent offices means a greater risk that information is inaccurate, inconsistent, varied in style, and hard to find.

Existing content on websites like the [Registrar](#), [Advising](#), [Student Services](#), the colleges, departments/divisions, [Dean of Students](#), [Undergraduate Honors](#), [Admissions](#), needs to be audited and consolidated.

Special attention should be paid to the Registrar's website which BREI called, "very confusing." The primary pages of the [Registrar's website](#), the [quarterly schedule of](#)

[classes](#), the [Navigator](#), the [UCSC General Catalog](#), [FAQs](#), and the [Academic Calendar](#), are all very difficult to navigate and all contain slightly different versions of the same information.

This one-stop authoritative advising website needs to be backed by strong campus leadership, possibly a more general campus-wide initiative to better integrate and coordinate UC Santa Cruz's sprawling digital landscape. Because content is in the hands of so many independent units, it will take strong leadership put Recommendation 7.1 into effect.

Creation of an authoritative advising website needs to be coordinated with the [UCSC Web Leadership Team](#). Working with web leadership provides the advising community with an opportunity to have a "seat at the table." The perspective, needs, recommendations, and advice of the advising community should and can be shared with web leadership by collaborating.

Accessible and user-friendly

The website should use language that is clear, direct, and easy to understand by everyone, including first generation and nontraditional students. Making our sometimes complex policies, practices, and procedures accessible would greatly assist with the current problem of high volume, time intensive email advising.

A glossary of commonly used UC Santa Cruz terminology and acronyms could be created as a resource for students to reference.

Organization of content should reflect the student experience, not the university's opaque organizational structure. For example, many students will not be familiar with the term Registrar, but they will understand a link to "Search & Register for Classes." The latter language speaks more to the service the student needs, as opposed to the name of an office.

We should strive to keep the content on this website from being overwhelming: the language should be easy to follow but otherwise concise. Unnecessary use of acronyms and jargon should be avoided.

Website navigation best practices such as links and page anchors should be used whenever possible to assist navigation within the website and beyond. In addition, the website should be interactive and make use of different modalities for taking in information, including videos.

The website should be tested and evaluated by students during development and especially prior to release. Focus groups could be used to better understand what barriers students are facing and what services and information they need. A plan should be put into place to assess the effectiveness of the site on an ongoing basis

after release. Students should be able to report problems and provide feedback about their experience using the site in real time.

Finally, the website should be smartphone/tablet compatible.

Given the size and complexity of the task of creating an excellent one-stop advising website, we recommend investing one-time funds to either hire or free up personnel to accomplish it.

Recommendation 7.2

Re-design the online catalog to be standardized, authoritative, user-friendly, and searchable. Until this happens,

- create a catalog template that programs are expected to use,
- create a web template for program-level advising pages.

Related to the discussion above, our current catalog is hard for students to use, and it is arguably not authoritative: the information it contains is typically also presented on the websites of individual programs, and worse, the two versions may differ in significant ways. Since the university catalog constitutes a contract with students, it needs to be clear and authoritative.

Work within the [Curriculum Management Project](#) is addressing this recommendation. However, until a revised online catalog and governance structure for its content is put into place, we recommend that programs be expected to follow a campus-wide template for catalog information. A template would ensure that all essential policy pieces were included in a similar format, using similar terms (for example major qualification rather than admission to the major) for each program, that each student population was addressed, and that students are treated equitably. In the absence of policies students can receive inequitable treatment when it comes to exceptions.

In a similar vein, an undergraduate program advising website template could save work at the program-level, and ensure consistency, and make navigation easier for users. If our web information were more consistent, students could better access information themselves, and advisors could more reliably find and share the information with students.

Resources

Current UC Santa Cruz advising site: <http://advising.ucsc.edu/>

EOP Advising: <http://eop.ucsc.edu/advising>

Transfer Advising Guide: <http://advising.ucsc.edu/transfer-guide/index.html>

Advising Resources from the Registrar's Office:

<http://registrar.ucsc.edu/navigator/section1/advising.html>

Career Advising: <http://careers.ucsc.edu/student/Advising/index.html>

Departments, Schools, and Colleges all have their own advising pages.

8. Coordination of Advising

As discussed in Section 3, we have a decentralized model of advising at UC Santa Cruz. Even focusing on academic advisors, college advisors are distributed among the ten colleges, and departmental advisors among the academic departments and divisions. All students have access to both college and departmental advisors for their entire career. In addition, many students work with EOP counselors and/or Career Center coaches, and so on for the many student advising and service centers across campus. In such a context, it is important that academic advisors across colleges and programs be well coordinated, and that coordination be easy between academic advisors and other staff who advise and serve students.

Staff have always coordinated by phone, email, or other means. More recently, our new [Slug Success](#) enterprise system makes possible new ways of coordinating. For example, most academic advisors now use Slug Success to keep electronic notes on student advising appointments, and these notes can be viewed by other academic advisors. Slug Success also has dedicated case management functionality that the advising community is beginning to explore. However, there is more we can do using Slug Success and other tools to deepen coordination and make it more successful.

Coordination among advisors and other staff is important on another level as well. Coordination is required in order to ensure that new policies and procedures related to advising are known, that best practices are shared, that expectations of advising are known and consistent, and that professional development opportunities are consistently available.

Population Health Management Model

We face two related challenges to effective advising. One is advisor caseload. (See Section 6.) Advisors simply do not have the time to have a series of meaningful, developmental advising interactions with every student. A second challenge is prioritization: knowing which students need help or advising most urgently and what exactly they need.

The [Education Advisory Board](#) (EAB), a research and consulting firm in the area of higher education, likens these challenges to those faced in the healthcare industry, and recommends an approach to the challenges that is borrowed from healthcare: the population health management model.⁹ This model divides students up into three groups having low, moderate, and high risk levels and approaches each group in qualitatively different ways, as outlined below.

⁹ “What can health care teach us about student success?”, Education Advisory Board, 2016, available at www.eab.com. Everyone with an @ucsc.edu email address has access to reports and other useful resources from EAB, on the EAB website. First time users have to register.

Table 4: Elements of the population health management model

Risk	Criteria for risk assignment	Example approaches
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flagged by faculty or staff - On probation - Intersecting known risk factors - High predicted risk score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intensive advising / coaching - Case management
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Falling GPA - Failure to enroll - Not on track for major qualification - Moderate predicted risk score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactive group outreach by risk factor - Peer advisor calls - Advising or appropriate referral as needed
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None of the above - Low predicted risk score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-advising/service - Behavioral nudges - Campaigns promoting successful behaviors - Easy access to support services

In this view of things, low-risk students—those judged likely to succeed and graduate—are the largest group, and the approach to this group is basically one of *preventive care*, again using the health care analogy, where preventive care relies on measures that can scale up: self-advising and self-service, mass ‘nudges’ rooted in behavioral psychology, mass campaigns, and easy access to commonly needed services. The smallest group are high-risk students. These may be students who have presented to a faculty or staff member with a serious issue, or are on probation, etc. Or they may have multiple risk factors associated with them, e.g., a group of underrepresented low-income first generation students. This group requires coordinated, holistic, “high-touch” care. In between are the moderate risk students. This group needs to be monitored for possible changes in risk factors. Where they arise, the recommended approach is proactive outreach based on common risk factors. For example, this might mean text messages to students who have not registered for courses in the next term, perhaps followed up by phone calls with peer advisors. Or it could mean outreach to students who are not on track to satisfy major qualification requirements, leading to tutoring, advising appointments, workshops, or other measures.

The population health management model addresses the problem of advisor caseload by focusing most advisor time on moderate and high risk students. For this model to work, we need better ways of proactively identifying students at different levels of risk and understanding the nature of that risk. Of course this already happens in various ways, but the Slug Success system provides functionality that promises to help in several respects:

1. Early classroom alert in selected high-stakes courses, where we rely on instructors to alert staff about students at risk of not succeeding in the course. This should happen early in the quarter when intervention is most likely to help.

2. Detection of worrisome performance in key courses, such as courses known to be predictive of student success or that are important to major qualification.
3. Providing predictive analytics that identify at risk students based on pre-admissions data and performance.

Slug Success also provides functionality for advisor coordination, case management, and outreach campaigns based on risk factor, which are elements of the health population management model. Importantly, it also provides tools for tracking student appointments, referrals, and follow-up. This puts us in a better position than we have been to assess the usage of advising and other services, and to attempt to assess the effectiveness of advising and related student services.

Higher-Level Coordination

As noted above, there needs to be a high degree of coordination among academic advisors when it comes to policies, procedures, and practices. When new policies or procedures are created, what ensures that advisors know about them and follow them? Similarly, if an advisor learns about new practices that are impactful, how do other advisors hear about it? Where do expectations about good advising come from?

Obviously there are answers to these questions. For example, the advising community holds a day-long Winter Advising Forum every year, where a great deal of information is shared and discussion is possible. There are also regular meetings of advisor groups such as college preceptors and departmental advisors. There are organized trainings and orientations for advisors.

Still, arguably the strongest factor in ensuring sustained, high-level coordination is the structure of an organization. For example, the organization of college advising ensures coordination among college advisors. For each college there is a lead advisor, a Lead Academic Preceptor. (Colleges Nine and Ten have one Lead Academic Preceptor who oversees both colleges.) Preceptors meet regularly with each other, and each preceptor in turn meets regularly with his or her own college advisor colleagues, who report to the Preceptor position. This organization supports a shared culture of expertise and expectations. In addition, there is a Colleges Advising Coordinator within the [Office of Campus Advising Coordination](#). This position “provides support and leadership for all ten colleges including hiring, training, assessment, oversight of functional teams and support for streamlining policy and procedure”¹⁰.

There are fewer analogous structures or positions in the case of departmental advisors. Undergraduate advisors are housed together in the School of

¹⁰ Office of Campus Advising Coordination - “Who we are”, <https://advising.ucsc.edu/about/office/who/index.html>.

Engineering, and there is an Advising Coordinator among those advisors. All other departmental advisors are housed in academic departments. These advisors do not necessarily report to anyone with undergraduate advising expertise (unless there is more than one undergraduate advisor in the department); they normally report to department managers, who may or may not have undergraduate advising experience or expertise. In addition, many of these advisors have significant job duties beyond advising, as discussed in Section 6. Apart from the case of Engineering, there are no lead advising positions within academic divisions. Similarly, there is no analog of the Colleges Advising Coordinator position for departmental advisors.

These differences between college and departmental advising mean less coordination among departmental advisors. Similarly, for many departmental advisors, there is less basis for a shared culture of advising expertise and expectations. Advising practices can differ widely from program to program. Nothing guarantees a consistent approach to professional development for departmental advisors. These facts are barriers to coordination not only among departmental advisors but between departmental advisors and other advisors. They make institutional change in the area of advising challenging. While we see the virtues of our current organizational structure and do not recommend any organizational revolutions, we think some organizational adaptation is needed in order to make sustained coordination and institutional change in advising possible.

Recommendations

Recommendation 8.1

Ensure that all academic advisors, Educational Opportunity Programs advisors, and STARS advisors use Slug Success, including maintaining electronic advising notes and recording appointment reasons in that system.

At this point most academic advisors use Slug Success, as do some STARS advisors and EOP counselors. All such staff should use this system for the reasons given above and further below.

Recommendation 8.2

Determine how advising coordination, usage tracking and analytics, and student success would benefit from having other staff / offices use Slug Success, and ensure the use of that system where advantageous.

Recommendation 8.3

Adopt the population health model approach to advising.

To adopt the population health model approach to advising means at least the following:

1. Determining criteria for dividing students into low, moderate, and high risk groups.
2. Developing distinct, well-defined approaches and interventions for students depending on risk level and the nature of the risk.

Doing 1, in turn, requires that we continue careful implementation and institutionalization of early alert in high-stakes courses, the detection of worrisome performance in key courses, and predictive analytics in the Slug Success system. It also means that we coordinate the intervention strategies (and maybe others) under “Criteria for risk assignment” in Table 4 above. Doing 2 means exploring the “Example approaches” in Table 4, among other strategies. Both of these require developing ongoing trainings for advisors to ensure effective use of the analytics and indicators and cohesive practice.

In addition, adopting this model for advising crucially depends on adopting other recommendations in this report, including those related to self-advising resources (Section 7), those that bear on advisor workload and how they spend their time (Sections 6 and 9), and other recommendations in this section.

Recommendation 8.4

Use Slug Success functionality for tracking appointments and referrals, combined with other data and analytics, to regularly assess the usage of advising and assess outcomes, with an eye to improving policies and practices based on data.

Recommendation 8.5

Divisions should create well-compensated Divisional Lead Advisor positions.

- Establish dotted reporting lines from departmental advisors to these positions.
- Establish dotted reporting lines from these positions to the Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Advising.

In our view these advising leadership positions must be occupied by experienced undergraduate advisors, with deep knowledge of advising foundations, counseling techniques, strategies for reaching and retaining students, issues around diversity and advising, etc. They should spend their time on advising leadership tasks, including the following:

- Creating or delivering training and orientation / on-boarding programming for departmental advisors
- Overseeing professional development, ensuring participation in Coalition of Departmental Advisor meetings (CODA)
- Ensuring standardization and streamlining of policy and procedure
- Spreading best practices

- Overseeing assessment of divisional advising
- Leading divisional advising meetings, team building, mentoring
- Cross-training advisors
- In coordination with Curriculum Analysts, reviewing programs and curricula
- Escalating issues
- Communicating as needed with other relevant bodies, such as the Committee on Educational Policy

These positions should also be ones of campus-wide leadership: divisional lead advisors should be members of the Advising Council (see Recommendation 6.3) and should work closely with the Office of Advising Coordination.

Unless departmental advisors have dotted reporting lines to divisional lead advisors, our campus will suffer from the same organizational challenges that make advising coordination and institutional change difficult, for all of the reasons discussed above. For just the same reason, though divisional lead advisors should report to the relevant divisional dean or assistant dean, they should have dotted reporting lines to the Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Advising.

Divisional advising leaders might also supervise “enrollment hubs” during crunch times (see Recommendation 6.5), or problem-solve advisor capacity issues. For reasons discussed above about the importance of organizational structure, there should be a dotted reporting line from departmental advisors to lead advisors.

Advising leadership positions like those described here are common at other UC campuses. For example, UCB has 12 directors of advising; UCD has a director of advising within each college; UCLA has the same, as well as directors in each school; and UCI has 14 leadership positions, one per school.

An extra benefit of creating Divisional Lead Advisor positions is that they would provide a professional advancement pathway for departmental advisors. Many departmental advisors leave advising altogether for lack of such a pathway, and we lose their expertise. Such a position would be a springboard for higher career opportunities. This is true also for the position discussed below.

Recommendation 8.6

Create a new Programs Advising Coordinator position similar to the Colleges Advising Coordinator position.

The Programs Advising Coordinator would work closely with the Lead Divisional Advisors in identifying issues with processes, communications, policy, etc., and help create and implement training and work tools. The focus of this position

would be on creating and supporting processes that hold *across* academic divisions. Duties should include the following, in collaboration with divisional lead advisors:

- Developing and improving standard process, policies, and tools.
- Standardizing and coordinating advising practices and information about programs.
- Supporting training and development opportunities to improve support for advisors and create consistency across programs.
- Scheduling divisional lead advisor meetings, include curriculum analysts and managers as needed.
- Collaborating with campus partners to improve student success.

It is important to note that, while creation of the positions discussed here would require investment, the work they do would ultimately pay off in making advising more efficient and more effective.

9. Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Many of the recommendations in this report are ultimately about liberating advisors to focus on those aspects of their work that will most benefit student success. In this spirit, we must confront an important barrier to this goal: the existence of policies, procedures, and practices that cause an inordinate drain on advisor time and which often constitute barriers to student success themselves. Many of the recommendations in this section will require strong leadership from the central administration as well as divisions, departments, and the Academic Senate.

Recommendations

One important drain on advisor time arises from the great complexity and variation in major qualification, declaration, and appeals policies and processes across programs. As things stand, navigating these distinct requirements and processes, particularly for STEM majors, causes great confusion for students as well as advisors. If policies and processes were more uniform, then it would be much easier to advise pre-STEM majors. Advisors could then spend more time on more impactful advising, for example assisting students in exploring if a particular STEM major is a good fit.

Recommendation 9.1

Make the major qualification, declaration, and appeals policies and processes simple and uniform for all programs.

Advisors spend time helping students determine their progress toward satisfying major declaration requirements. There should be online tools for every major to help with this, making self-advising simple.

Recommendation 9.2

Create online major declaration tools for all academic programs.

Advisors also spend a great deal of time helping students determine whether they've satisfied all general education and program requirements. Many universities have online tools to help with this. In principle, we have one too: the Academic Advisement Report (AAR). Not only does it have the functionality to audit a student's degree progress, it also allows students to see how many requirements they would have satisfied if they chose a different major ("what if" functionality). However, though it has existed for years it has never been functional across campus programs. We must invest the resources to make the AAR functional for all academic programs, and to maintain its functionality. Doing so will require the active support and participation of academic departments.

Recommendation 9.3

Make the Academic Advisement Report fully functional for all academic programs.

For students, scheduling classes, including related sections and laboratories etc., making them fit their work schedules and other commitments, avoiding conflicts, is a complicated task. Because of this they often turn to advisors for help. The advisor time taken up over scheduling issues multiplies because of changes of plan, unintended conflicts, changes in scheduling that throw a plan out of whack, and so on. The campus implemented a tool—[MyScheduler](#)—rolled out in Fall 2017, that will make scheduling much easier for students (and so advisors).

In a similar vein, advisors support students in the complicated task of creating their 4-year academic plans, integrating all major and minor requirements, general education requirements, and college requirements. When students change programs, or when something renders their existing plan unworkable (e.g., failing a required course, education abroad, taking leave), they require help formulating a new plan. There are tools that can help with this task too.

Recommendation 9.4

Acquire and implement a tool for creating and revising academic plans.

Though one-on-one in-person advising is vital for developmental advising, it is not always necessary for other kinds of advising. We have discussed the need for more self-advising (Section 7), but another important strategy for safeguarding advisor time is use of group advising sessions.

Recommendation 9.5

When informational and prescriptive information is delivered in-person (as opposed to online), it should be done in groups.

Policies, and the implementation of policies can, even with the best of intentions, lead to complex webs of rules that do not always serve student success in the manners intended. While additional requirements and hurdles can be an important part of helping students achieve their academic goals, they can also retard progress through unexpected consequences. In reviewing processes related to enrollment and advising, the subcommittee determined that there was significant potential for positive change in terms of more efficient use of classroom capacity and more effective monitoring and supervision of students facing academic difficulty.

Recommendation 9.6

Refine and improve processes surrounding waitlists, classroom scheduling, and waitlist metrics to ensure the most effective use of classroom capacity across the curriculum.

The development of metrics regarding waitlists should come with an articulation of departmental and divisional responsibilities to address those metrics in major qualification and other key courses. We also suggest creating a process for automatic room changes based on under-enrollment and waitlist demand, rather than based on individual faculty and department preference.

Recommendation 9.7

Revise processes for supervision of probationary students to enhance consistency, reduce redundant work, and ensure that the most significant amounts of time are spent on cases that can have the highest impact.

Recommendation 9.8

Encourage the Committee on Educational Policy to complete decisions for the next academic year—including catalog statements—by May so that they may fully inform student decisions and advising in all processes following the Statement of Intent to Register.

10. Training and Professional Development of Advisors

The quality and consistency of advising depends in part on how we train new advisors and what professional development opportunities we provide to advisors. “Training” refers to information shared through the job onboarding process and necessary for advisors to do their jobs. This includes learning about the Academic Information System (AIS), the Academic Advisement Report (AAR), degree requirements, support and enrichment opportunities, understanding our student population, etc. “Professional development” refers to learning that is ongoing, for example about changes in policy or procedure, changes in our student populations and issues that affect success and persistence, current issues, and trends in higher education. The reader can learn about currently existing opportunities for training and development at <https://advising.ucsc.edu/advisers/traindev/index.html>.

Ideally there would be an excellent training / onboarding process that covers everything new advisors need for their role; a reliable manual for advisors; and regular professional development opportunities. Though there are many opportunities already in place, the Advising Task Force agreed that there is work to be done in all of these areas, and that what exists is not equally accessible to advisors across colleges and departments.

There are significant challenges to the goal of excellent and consistent training and professional development. First, many campus policies and procedures are very complicated. This topic is addressed in Section 9. This fact, and a culture of exceptions and appeals, make advisor training more difficult. Second is advisor workload. A survey of attendees of a recent Winter Advising Forum found that the most common reason advisors and related staff do not take advantage of training and professional development opportunities was not lack of funding, but workload and lack of time. Third, some advisors on our campus report to a supervisor whose experience and expertise is not in the area of undergraduate advising. This results in inconsistent training for advisors, and it can take a long time for new advisors to learn all the things they need to know to serve students well. Combined with a high turnover rate in advising, this results in an advising workforce that is often not working optimally.

Enhancing the UC Santa Cruz culture of advising as a profession will improve the advising services to students and help to retain advisors.

Training

Colleges

Our colleges recently launched a coordinated training model, with coordination and some training happening in the Office of Campus Advising Coordination and some happening in the advisor’s college. This coordinated training model

recognizes a core of information that is common to many forms of advising on campus and that can be covered centrally, improving the efficiency of training. Still under development by the Colleges Advising Coordinator, this training covers the campus advising mission and goals, policies and procedures, and other topics. It includes site visits to campus offices (e.g., Admissions, Registrar, Educational Opportunity Programs), observation of campus events such as orientations, and the shadowing of experienced advisors. This training is currently limited to college advisors.

A colleges-wide online training manual and policy reference is currently under development by the Colleges Advising Coordinator.

Departments / Programs

Training in departmental or program advising offices varies widely across campus. The advisor's department manager or another supervisor typically trains the new advisor. (In offices with more than one advising staff, training may be done by a coordinator / manager or another advisor.) Some departments or advising offices have a procedure manual or materials left by a prior advisor. Departments with one advisor may be connected to current advisors in the same division for informal training, or for assistance when troubleshooting student and enrollment issues.

The Office of Campus Advising Coordination makes an overview of mission, goals, objectives, and policy available to departmental advisors. This has been done on an ad hoc basis for some time; recently that office began offering the training once per quarter and on request.

Development

The need for professional development for advisors has been highlighted by the National Academic Advising Association (NAAA), to ensure that advisors have the necessary conceptual and relational skills, and that they remain aware of developments at other universities. Professional development is particularly relevant for providing our advisors with the knowledge and skills needed to work with students coming from underserved communities.

There are various professional development opportunities available to advisors on campus. In addition to the ad hoc opportunities that arise, regular opportunities include the following:

- [Winter Advising Forum](#)
- [In Service Training](#)
- [Advising Certificate Program](#)
- [Diversity and Inclusion Program](#)
- Training and Development through Staff HR (<http://shr.ucsc.edu/training/>)

Advisors should also be provided professional development opportunities away from campus. Recently the Division of Undergraduate Education regularized ensuring \$700 per advisor annually for professional development; however, it is unclear how long that funding will continue. As for academic departments and divisions, opportunities vary by office.

Recommendations

Recommendation 10.1

Establish campus-wide training programs for all advisors.

As noted above, the training provided by the Office of Advising Coordination is currently limited to college advisors. But a centralized training program should be available to all academic advisors. Ideally that training, or relevant aspects of it, would also be available to advising staff in Educational Opportunity Programs, Services for Transfer and Re-Entry Students, International Student and Scholar Services, the Career Center, and other offices.

We envision distinct training programs for college versus departmental advisors, though there would be significant overlap. Though some training should be self-guided, in-person training is also needed. College preceptors carry out training in colleges. If we establish Divisional Lead Advisors as recommended in Section 8, then these lead advisors would carry out training for new departmental advisors. Having these lead advisors in place is important for reasons discussed in Section 8.

In addition, campus-wide programs for established advisors should be developed for continuous training. These programs should cover changes in policy and procedure, changes in our student populations, new issues that affect success and persistence, and current issues and trends in higher education. The Winter Advising Forum seems to be the best venue for this ongoing training.

Recommendation 10.2

Create a regulation and policy manual for all academic advisors.

There is currently no one authoritative resource for advisors that covers campus general regulations and policies that impact students, including academic senate policies. As things stand, advisors have to search for answers in diverse places including the [Navigator](#), the [Academic Senate Manual](#), the [Registrar's website](#), and the [Undergraduate Advising website](#). A new, consolidate manual is needed. This manual might well connect to the student-facing advising resource discussed in Section 7, but these two resources must remain distinct, lest the student-facing resource lose its legibility. The advisor version may contain links for advisors embedded in student-facing explanations of a regulation or policy and could be merged with the general catalog.

Recommendation 10.3

Continue offering the new campus-wide Advising Certificate Program.

The new [Advising Certificate Program](#) is a year-long program to take advisor development beyond those topics included in training. The design of this program was based on modules developed by the National Academic Advisor Association. Areas covered include student development theories, approaches to listening and communication, advising versus counseling, and ways to improve the alignment between advising practices and articulated campus goals such as reducing disparities in graduation rates due to family income. This program is an important new source of professional development that should be continued.

Recommendation 10.4

Guarantee funding for the external professional development of all advisors, and put in place expectations for seeking both internal and external professional development.

Each advisor should be allocated funds—we recommend at least \$800 per advisor—for external professional development (e.g. attendance at a professional conference). With these resources, advisors should be expected to join a professional organization and attend one conference per year. They could be further incentivized to participate at a high level at conferences (i.e., presenting, participating on a panel, serving on committees, other leadership). More generally, supervisors should maintain concrete expectations around advisor professional development both internal and external to the campus.

Recommendation 10.5

Establish a regular forum for sharing research and best practices in advising.

A regular venue for sharing actionable research findings in advising should be established and offered to the advising community (broadly construed). This might involve a partnership between lead advisors and the Student Success Evaluation and Research Center.

Resources

Training Blueprint for New Advisors

<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Training-Blueprint-for-New-Advisors.aspx>

UC Santa Cruz

<https://advising.ucsc.edu/advisers/traindev/index.html>

11. Faculty Advisors

Many faculty enjoy advising students. In addition, faculty are the best advisors in certain areas. Apart from the obvious role that faculty play in advising related to their courses and independent studies, a faculty member can relate to a student what it is like to study in a particular field. She can mentor students in research projects, something known to promote student retention and success. She can give advice about graduate school and specific graduate programs. A faculty member can also give encouragement or act as a role model, both of which are essential for some students to be successful.

Given the demands on faculty time and the large number of students in many majors, we can expect faculty to play a role in advising outside of course advising only if that role is well circumscribed and capitalizes on the faculty's unique strengths and position. Advising by faculty complements that from professional advising staff in unique ways.

Advising of Prospective and New Majors

There are many benefits to students of engaging with faculty at an early stage in their studies. Only the faculty can best convey what their fields and subfields are about. In addition, a positive experience engaging with faculty can boost a student's sense of belonging and make students more likely to seek out faculty for advising in the future. Many faculty don't realize how difficult it can be for students to approach them. It is even more difficult for our first generation students and for students whose less privileged backgrounds make them wonder whether they belong at UC Santa Cruz.

Some departments, such as Physics, assign all majors to faculty members, having all faculty meet at least once with all majors. Many departments would find this to be impossible given the number of majors per faculty. However, even in those departments there can be meaningful engagement between faculty and students in group advising and/or social settings. For example, the History Department has "Advising Socials" with faculty in Winter and Spring quarter.

Recommendations

Recommendation 11.1

Every department or major program should have at least one faculty member participate in programming about the major during each day of summer orientation.

Recommendation 11.2

Departments and programs should hold at least one significant event per year for new and prospective majors which a significant number of faculty are expected to attend.

Faculty and Slug Success

Many students experience academic difficulties. The sooner we can detect those difficulties and intervene in a meaningful way, the more likely the student will be to succeed. However, in most cases, if a student is at risk of failing one or more courses, no one but the instructors and the student herself know about it until course grades are in. By the time advisors meet to discuss what happened, and possibly to apply academic probation or a more serious consequence, the student may be deep in a GPA and time-to-degree hole it will be difficult to climb out of.

Many universities have improved on this state of affairs by establishing an early alert mechanism for selected courses. Ideally, advisors learn that a student is at risk in such a course within the first two or three weeks of the quarter. This makes early intervention possible, and intervention can take many forms: an advising appointment, referral for tutoring or supplemental instruction, or even simply very well framed messaging.

Recommendation 11.3

Instructors in high-stakes courses should partner with Slug Success to implement course early alert.

Early course alerts depend crucially on the faculty. The Slug Success system (see discussion in Section 8) makes faculty participation in early alert not very onerous: the instructor receives an email inviting her into the system, and she or a teaching assistant check off which students are at risk according to criteria that the instructor determines. Course early alert will probably be limited to selected “high stakes” courses—for example, gateway courses with high failure rates, or the College Core Course, etc.

Recommendation 11.4

Give dedicated faculty advisors advisor-role access to Slug Success, along with the training to make use of it.

For faculty who want to, there are deeper ways to make use of Slug Success for advising-related purposes. Most or all departments have faculty Undergraduate Program Directors, and faculty in some departments are designated undergraduate advisors. Assuming they have the necessary training in student records privacy (FERPA), such faculty can be given advisor-level access to Slug Success, and training in the system, allowing them to make use of the system’s shared electronic advising notes, appointment scheduling, and the rich information in each student’s academic profile.

In addition, some faculty may be willing to become more deeply engaged in particular advising initiatives having student success goals, given incentives and financial support.

Recommendation 11.5

Student Success and/or Undergraduate Education should create a call for proposals, with an offer of funding or other incentives, for faculty interested in engaging in advising projects with specified student success goals.

Engaging Students Thinking of Leaving

Though we tend to think that lower graduation rates are a function of poor academic success, the opposite can be true: many students who leave UC Santa Cruz transfer to another university, and some are high performers. For example, during the period March - September 2016 roughly 470 students withdrew from UC Santa Cruz; of these, 51% (~240 students) reported they were transferring to obtain a degree somewhere else. Of that latter group, 23% (~55) indicated that they had intended to transfer from UC Santa Cruz when they first enrolled here. (Most likely, UC Santa Cruz was not these students' first choice campus.) A full 38% of those transferring—roughly 90 students—transferred to another UC, the top three being Berkeley, Davis, and San Diego.¹¹

To lose a student in this way is not nearly so worrisome as watching a student drop out of college altogether, and some students find a better fit for their goals somewhere else. However, many students leave simply because we have somehow failed to engage them or show them that UC Santa Cruz can meet their goals. We would like to keep these students if we can. Toward that end, one of the best things we can do is engage them academically. Here is a role uniquely for faculty.

We can use Slug Success and employ other methods (such as monitoring transcript requests) to identify strong students who are at risk of leaving. We might focus in particular on such students who are not already participating in special engagement programs such as the College Scholars Program.¹²

Fostering Participation of Undergraduates in Research

Recommendation 11.6

Identify high-performing students at risk of leaving and provide them with research or similar opportunities with faculty in their chosen major.

Many forms of engagement, whether through student organizations, experiential learning, or research, contribute to student success by enhancing a student's sense

¹¹ "Exit survey March-September '16: preliminary report", UC Santa Cruz Institutional Research and Policy Studies Office.

¹² See "Six roles for faculty in student success", Academic Affairs Forum, EAB, Advisory Board Company.

of belonging and deepening her academic commitment. It is faculty who can provide engagement in the form of research participation, by overseeing a student's research project, involving students in their own projects or laboratories, or even simply by communicating about their research.

We can help create more opportunities for engagement in research by incentivizing it where possible, for both students and faculty.

Recommendation 11.7

If they do not already, departments should explicitly take mentorship of undergraduate research into consideration during faculty reviews.

Recommendation 11.8

The Office of Research and other research development officers should strongly encourage all applicants for grant funding to include funding for an undergraduate research component of the project.

Recommendation 11.9

Invite undergraduate majors to all research presentations, colloquia, performances, and the like; ideally, regularly offer such events specifically for majors and provide incentives for participation.

Many departments invite their majors to department-sponsored colloquia or research presentations. Sometimes such events are pitched specifically to undergraduates. Ideally these would be widely-adopted practices. Departments might consider ways of incentivizing participation in such events for both department faculty presenters and students who attend. For example, students can be incentivized by offering extra credit in courses. Or departments could create 2-credit courses that require students to attend department research presentations or colloquia and reflect on them in some way. A department faculty member might be offered a modest research stipend for giving a presentation intended especially for students.

Recommendation 11.10

Create short TED-talk style videos of faculty introducing their research and post them on department websites.

In addition, we recommend that Student Success partner with Academic Affairs and academic departments to create short TED-talk like videos of faculty talking about their research. This would be a way of reaching students who may not attend events but want to learn about what a faculty member does.

12. Peer Advisors/Mentors

Peer Advisors are undergraduate students committed to serving as role models to their peers and providing advising information to help students fulfill educational goals. Data from The Peer Advising Member Survey (Koring & Zahorik, 2012) showed that fewer than 2% of respondents suggested that peer advisers offers no benefit and 60% of respondents chose answers that express benefits in student-centered outcomes: retention, success, and student leadership development. While much assessment and research remains to be done, all evidence points to the conclusion that peer advising exerts a strong positive impact on all students involved, both the advisees served, and the peers who advise them.¹³

Peer advisors have experience with the campus. They are economical to the budget but can also relate to situations of their fellow students. They are not a replacement for staff or faculty advisors but a supplement to them.

Peer advising promotes the success of the peer advisor herself too. Students that participate in peer advising develop skills in problem solving and leading groups effectively, and serve as a role model to their peers. Research suggests that college students who participate in peer education display significant improvements in leadership, gain interpersonal skills, develop higher levels of self esteem, and create better personal health behaviors when measured on assessments before and after their peer education experience.¹⁴ For many that participate in a peer advising program it gives them a foundation and experience for future career opportunities in education.

Currently, many college and major advising offices at UC Santa Cruz have peer advisors. These localized peer advising programs range in size from 1-10 peer advisors, and focus on providing advising services and support. Some units are able to compensate their peer advisors, others offer academic credit. In both college and major advising offices, peer advisors engage in triage advising, enrollment assistance, class selection, basic academic planning, as well as answering phones, scheduling appointments, and referring students to support resources and services. Peer advising takes place in many other offices on campus as well, for example the Educational Opportunity Programs Office.

Starting Winter 2016, an Advising Programs Coordinator position was created, with the task of creating and supervising a new peer advising program that works closely with college advising and supports the larger student success initiatives of retaining students, encouraging timely degree completion, and improving

¹³ Heidi Koring & Dana T. Zahorik, *Peer Advising and Mentoring: A Guide for Advising Practitioners* 2nd Edition (Manhattan, KS; NACADA, 2013), 14.

¹⁴ Brack, Millard, & Shah 2008, "Are peer educators really peers?", *Journal of American College Health* 56.5, 566-8; Good, Halpin, & Halpin 2000, "A promising prospect for minority retention: students becoming peer mentors", *Journal of Negro Education* 69.4, 375-83.

graduation rates. Since implementation of the program in 2016, peer advisers in this program have supported college advising offices by offering front-line advising allowing professional advisers to focus on more complex situations, have conducted workshops for students, and have pursued campus-wide projects such as outreach to students who haven't enrolled for the upcoming quarter. In the 2017-18 year, many of the peer advisers have been trained as "success coaches," providing additional support to colleges in outreach to probationary and other students.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Peer Advising

Members of the Advising Task Force designed and administered a survey on peer advising to advisors across the UC system. Among the advantages to employing peer advisers, according to respondents, are that peer advisers:

- can relate to students with their direct experiences, including first-hand knowledge about courses and instructors
- can be less intimidating to speak to
- extend the range of outreach, services, and support to students
- allow staff advisors to focus on more complex advising cases
- provide staff advisors with a student perspective
- benefit themselves from taking on a paraprofessional leadership role

Among the potential disadvantages, according to respondents:

- Maintaining a peer advising program can feel time consuming to already busy staff
- Students do not always want to disclose personal information to another student
- Scheduling changes, and turnover, of peer advisers
- Lack of funding space for peer advisers
- Students do not have access to student records
- Potential risk of breach of confidentiality or bad advice given

Peer advisers can perform many functions, including the following:

- Assist with major declaration and academic planning
- Troubleshoot enrollment/registration issues
- Perform graduation checks
- Explain policies and procedures
- Refer students to resources
- Outreach to groups of students
- Attend and assist with orientation sessions

- Facilitate advising and support workshops
- Facilitate internship/research workshops
- Organize career presentations
- Assist with education abroad planning
- Do social media work
- Triage during peak times
- Answer phone calls and schedule appointments
- Assist with email
- Maintain office handouts and prepare materials for events

Training and Oversight

Currently individual offices—departments, colleges, EOP, and so on—take responsibility for training and development of their peer advisors. This alone is clearly not a good use of time for staff who are already busy, since much training applies to peer advisors wherever they work. This state of affairs also does not promote consistency of training or compliance with campus requirements. Centralized training would bring other potential advantages; for example, peer advisors-in-training would learn from each other and form a cohort, increasing their sense of belonging.

With the addition of the Advising Programs Coordinator position (see above), some common trainings and workshops should be offered for all peer advisors on campus. These trainings should cover topics like FERPA, student records privacy, and confidentiality; professional development for peer advisors; interpersonal communication skills; campus policies and procedures; and so on. If such training is developed, it should be required of all peer advisors. We should consider also providing brief training for supervisors of peer advisors.

Recommendations

Recommendation 12.1

Develop centralized required training for all peer advisors on campus.

One approach to training peer advisors would be to create a 2-credit course; earning credit can benefit peer advisors themselves. Training should probably begin in Spring Quarter so that peer advisors are prepared at the start of Fall.

Campus support of peer advisors should also include creation and promotion of online resources and a handbook for both peer advisors and their supervisors.

Recommendation 12.2

Develop online resources and a handbook for peer advisors and their supervisors.

Of course peer advisors need additional training and adequate oversight in their local office context too. Such training should probably include on the job shadowing of professional staff advisors or experienced peer advisors. There need to be clear lines of communication between peer advisors and supervisors. For example, Cowell College has peer advisors track and log each student they see; if questions arise, the staff advisor is able to follow up. And adequate supervision of peer advisors requires significant time. This time should be acknowledged and accounted for in staff supervisors' job descriptions.

Recommendation 12.3

Staff supervisors of peer advisors should have a percentage of their job devoted to this function in their job descriptions.

Recommendation 12.4

Access by peer advisors to student record information in AIS or other systems should be avoided wherever possible.

Given the sheer number of peer advisors and the high bar the campus must maintain on student privacy, we do not support giving such access to peer advisors unless there is a compelling need. Such access is not generally necessary, since students can log in to their own portals during peer advising sessions, thereby giving their consent to have their records viewed.

Recommendation 12.5

Peer advisors should be financially compensated for their work.

It is important to recruit dedicated and talented peer advisors, and this is more likely to happen given some form of meaningful compensation. If a cadre of peer advisors is not strong and reliable, then it becomes more of a burden than a help to the supervisor. It is also true that more and more of our students are in financial need. We recommend financial compensation. Offices supervising peer advisors should consider providing other incentives and rewards to them as well, such as letters acknowledging the scope and quality of their work, special social events, etc.

Recommendation 12.6

All offices with peer advisors should provide for and promote online peer advising.

Students increasingly access resources using their phones, tablets, and computers. Offices with peer advisors should create and clearly advertise means of access to peer advisors online, whether through email, Slug Success, or other means.

Recommendation 12.7

Develop a common approach and rubric for the evaluation of peer advising.

In order to gauge and improve the effectiveness of peer advising, we will need to articulate expected outcomes of peer advising, clarify how those outcomes can be assessed, put assessment mechanisms in place, and promote a cycle of improvement based on assessment. The Advising Programs Coordinator could take a leading role in this effort.

Appendix: List of All Recommendations

The first number in a recommendation number indicates the report section where it appears. See the relevant sections for further information and contextualization of these recommendations.

Recommendation 4.1

Develop metrics by which to assess student achievement of learning outcomes related to advising including career readiness; track those metrics and use them to inform advising and decision making.

Recommendation 5.1

All Career Center workshops should be co-sponsored by a partner outside of the Career Center - including academic departments.

Recommendation 5.2

The Career Center should create a strong “Request a Program” campaign targeted to faculty, academic advisors, and student services departments such as EOP, whereby those units may ask the Career Center to partner on a program. Such programs might include modules on outcomes for particular majors.

Recommendation 5.3

Conduct annual meetings with Deans, Division and Unit Heads, and other key stakeholders to share information about Career Center innovations and student employability data.

Recommendation 5.4

Deepen collaboration between departments and the Career Center in ways such as the following:

- Create “maps” for each major that highlight internships and other co-curricular opportunities, career paths, etc. An example of such maps can be found [here](#), from Queen’s University at Kingston, Ontario.
- Better educate incoming students and students transitioning between majors about the career implications of their major choice.
- Provide more opportunities for consultation with alumni.
- Exchange information about career trends and about the career paths that our graduates take.

Recommendation 5.5

Consider ways of formalizing the relationship between Career Center staff and the academic divisions.

Recommendation 5.6

House EOP counselors in the colleges, while maintaining the administrative integrity, supervision, leadership, and mission of EOP.

Recommendation 5.7

Hire sufficient EOP counselors to house one in each of the ten colleges.

Recommendation 6.1

Ensure there is adequate staffing in each college and departmental advising office to meet student need.

- Identify the percentage of advisor workload that is dedicated to advising.
- Ensure academic advising ratio does not grow above 1:650, with a goal of 1:600.

Recommendation 6.2

Preserve the two college advisors presently on temporary funding in UE, and bring the 9/10 advising office up to five advisors.

Recommendation 6.3

Establish an Advising Council and charge it with oversight and management of advising processes and policies.

Recommendation 6.4

Re-establish the Assistant Registrar for Advising position.

Recommendation 6.5

Consolidate and streamline support for course enrollment.

- Establish coordinated campus-wide support for course enrollment.
- Establish universal procedures for class registration and related advising processes (i.e. issuing permission codes).

Recommendation 6.6

Create a standard Career Tracks template for advisor positions in colleges and departments reflecting campus-wide expectations for advisors.

Recommendation 7.1

Create a “one-stop”, authoritative advising website for students.

Recommendation 7.2

Re-design the online catalog to be standardized, authoritative, user-friendly, and searchable. Until this happens,

- Create a catalog template that programs are expected to use.
- Create a web template for program-level advising pages.

Recommendation 8.1

Ensure that all academic advisors, Educational Opportunity Programs advisors, and STARS advisors use Slug Success, including maintaining electronic advising notes and recording appointment reasons in that system.

Recommendation 8.2

Determine how advising coordination, usage tracking and analytics, and student success would benefit from having other staff / offices use Slug Success, and ensure the use of that system where advantageous.

Recommendation 8.3

Adopt the population health model approach to advising.

Recommendation 8.4

Use Slug Support functionality for tracking appointments and referrals, combined with other data and analytics, to regularly assess the usage of advising and assess outcomes, with an eye to improving policies and practices based on data.

Recommendation 8.5

Divisions should create well-compensated Divisional Lead Advisor positions.

- Establish dotted reporting lines from departmental advisors to these positions
- Establish dotted reporting lines from these positions to the Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Advising

Recommendation 8.6

Create a new Programs Advising Coordinator position similar to the Colleges Advising Coordinator position.

Recommendation 9.1

Make the major qualification, declaration, and appeals policies and processes simple and uniform for all programs.

Recommendation 9.2

Create online major declaration tools for all academic programs.

Recommendation 9.3

Make the Academic Advisement Report fully functional for all academic programs.

Recommendation 9.4

Acquire and implement a tool for creating and revising academic plans.

Recommendation 9.5

When informational and prescriptive information is delivered in-person (as opposed to online), it should be done in groups.

Recommendation 9.6

Refine and improve processes surrounding waitlists, classroom scheduling, and

waitlist metrics to ensure the most effective use of classroom capacity across the curriculum.

Recommendation 9.7

Revise processes for supervision of probationary students to enhance consistency, reduce redundant work, and ensure that the most significant amounts of time are spent on cases that can have the highest impact.

Recommendation 9.8

Encourage the Committee on Educational Policy to complete decisions for the next academic year—including catalog statements—by May so that they may fully inform student decisions and advising in all processes following the Statement of Intent to Register.

Recommendation 10.1

Establish campus-wide training programs for all advisors.

Recommendation 10.2

Create a regulation and policy manual for all academic advisors.

Recommendation 10.3

Continue offering the new campus-wide Advising Certificate Program.

Recommendation 10.4

Guarantee funding for the external professional development of all advisors, and put in place expectations for seeking both internal and external professional development.

Recommendation 10.5

Establish a regular forum for sharing research and best practices in advising.

Recommendation 11.1

Every department or major program should have at least one faculty member participate in programming about the major during each day of summer orientation.

Recommendation 11.2

Departments and programs should hold at least one significant event per year for new and prospective majors which a significant number of faculty are expected to attend.

Recommendation 11.3

Instructors in high-stakes courses should partner with Slug Success to implement course early alert.

Recommendation 11.4

Give dedicated faculty advisors advisor-role access to Slug Success, along with the training to make use of it.

Recommendation 11.5

Student Success and/or Undergraduate Education should create a call for proposals, with an offer of funding or other incentives, for faculty interested in engaging in advising projects with specified student success goals.

Recommendation 11.6

Identify high-performing students at risk of leaving and provide them with research or similar opportunities with faculty in their chosen major.

Recommendation 11.7

If they do not already, departments should explicitly take mentorship of undergraduate research into consideration during faculty reviews.

Recommendation 11.8

The Office of Research and other research development officers should strongly encourage all applicants for grant funding to include funding for an undergraduate research component of the project.

Recommendation 11.9

Invite undergraduate majors to all research presentations, colloquia, performances, and the like; ideally, regularly offer such events specifically for majors and provide incentives for participation.

Recommendation 11.10

Create short TED-talk style videos of faculty introducing their research and post them on department websites.

Recommendation 12.1

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Recommendation 12.2

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