Academic Advising Program Review
University of California, Riverside
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Submitted by:

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Introduction

At the invitation of the University of California Riverside, Dr. Corey Hollis, Stacey Sketo-Rosener, and Dr. Charlie Nutt took part in the program review of academic advising at the university. We are members of the NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, and we base this report on consideration of the extensive program review report provided to us prior to our three-day virtual consultation which involved in-depth interviews with various and relevant administrators, faculty, academic advising professionals, and students at the University of California, Riverside.

As a result of the documentation provided in advance of the visit and the virtual meetings with individuals from all areas of the colleges and schools, we gained an understanding of current academic advising policies, processes, procedures. Our overall observations cover what we believe are the strengths and challenges/opportunities facing the colleges associated with academic advising. This report then offers recommendations for consideration intended both to create a comprehensive academic advising program and to enhance students' advising experiences.

Among the many strengths observed are the dedicated primary-role advisors in the colleges and schools who want to be effective advisors with accurate and timely information. There are also dedicated faculty who are committed and responsible for delivering academic advising experiences to students. Also apparent is the administration's commitment to improving advising and communicating the important role it plays in student success. There is a strong desire on the part of all those involved in advising to provide students with the best advising experience and to create an institutional commitment to an advising program which delivers the highest quality academic advising experience to all students regardless of which college and school they are in. The colleges and schools expressed the need to create more consistency in the advising experience provided by all advisors, define the roles of advisors and students, clarify what constitutes an effective advising session, recommend how to deliver effective, comprehensive, and on-going professional development experiences for advisors, and any additional suggestions to enhance advising. However, there is also a strong commitment to the decentralized nature of the academic advising at the University where the colleges and schools maintain autonomy to meet the varied needs of the students in the majors in their colleges and schools.

Improvement is accomplished through effective change, and change is a process that requires intentional and thoughtful efforts. Such efforts are often guided by shared...
vision. An effective advising program requires a mutual understanding of what advising is and the lack of shared understanding calls for a systematic process to define advising and what constitutes an efficient and effective advising session at the University of California Riverside. It is important that all advising stakeholders be involved in redefining advising for the university and developing a consistent understanding for what advising is and that is clearly communicated to all, most importantly, to the students. Advising must be seen as integral to student success and as "developmental" and "teaching" rather than registration and scheduling. Vision, mission, goals, and outcomes for advising must guide the creation of a comprehensive program which is delivered to students in the differing colleges and schools.

The administration, staff, and faculty at the university and in the colleges and schools expressed a sincere desire to take advising to the highest level, and to support their very diverse student populations in the attainment of their educational goals. The colleges and schools have critically reviewed the existing advising practices as documented in the program review document and are committed to plan strategically for improvement. Recommendations in this report are organized around the themes of staffing, communication and collaboration, organization and structure, technology, and assessment.

This report comes with our high regard for the leadership, administrators, faculty, academic advising professionals and students of the University of California Riverside and their commitment to academic advising and student success.
Staffing

One of the greatest strengths of academic advising at UC Riverside is the dedication, passion, competence, and caring of academic advisors, which was strongly acknowledged by all stakeholders – faculty, administration, management, and by the advisors themselves. Academic advising is crucial to student success and retention, and most people acknowledged this, although not all stakeholders understand exactly how academic advising contributes to student success in supporting students and interacting with them as individuals, and not solely because of program planning.

In speaking with various stakeholders from the different schools and colleges, there were several unanimous or near-unanimous areas of concern that were raised, one of which was the need for more advising staff and the concern that student-to-advisor ratios were either rising or already too high. Other areas of concern that emerged included defining advising and the role of advisors, and addressing attitudes towards and understanding of academic advising; addressing inconsistencies in policies and processes, both within and across some schools; clearly defining and allocating authority; and addressing some of the attitudes towards and understanding of academic advising.

Increasing the number of advisors

Given the current and potential economic situation, funding for additional advisors will be difficult to prioritize with the decline in resources and other competing needs to run a large institution such as UCR. Thus, while we strongly recommend that more advisors be judiciously added where needed after careful consideration (e.g., replacing valuable staff in CNAS who were grant funded), we also need to consider other ways in which to support staffing to be able to continue providing excellent advising services to students.

If additional staff can be made available, it is likely not to be in sufficient numbers, but can provide significant benefits if judiciously allocated. For example, advising units who cannot hire more advisors could consider allocating staffing resources to coordinate the utilization of undergraduate peer counselors to handle many basic/frontline tasks that do not need the expertise of an experienced and more expensive academic advisor. In addition, such programs are mutually beneficial, giving students the opportunity for their own professional development and growth while also providing some income as well, and engaging them in the university; many students find these kinds of experiences extremely rewarding. Finally, such programs allow the opportunity for professional
growth among staff involved in creating and maintaining such a project, thereby engaging staff and contributing to their retention and job satisfaction.

Another way to look at staffing is to consider the responsibilities of academic advisors, and to determine what tasks are essential to the academic advising role. Administrative tasks such as enrollment management/scheduling, coursework articulation, and degree conferrals can be done by trained administrative staff, thus freeing up academic advisors for the more complex and interpersonal interactions with students that can support student retention and success. Academic advisors can and should provide input on curricular matters in terms of how they affect the student experience or progress – for example, how changing the requirements for a major would impact students, or what classes students typically need at any given stage of their academic careers – but actual implementation should be done by the appropriate professionals (e.g., faculty for curricular changes; enrollment management people utilizing data for scheduling tasks). Releasing such tasks from the responsibility of academic advisors can have the actual effect of increasing their advising capacity without adding FTE to advising. We strongly recommend that these administrative tasks be realigned with other personnel.

Finally, exploring whether a case model or case load approach is the most efficient way to provide support could also free up advising resources. While in some schools (e.g., CNAS, BCOE), this more structured support is necessary to ensure that UCR’s student population has the best chance of success, in other schools, particularly the very small or very large ones, it may not be necessary to approach advising in a mandatory way. We are not necessarily advocating that advising in a particular unit be changed, only that the various units consider whether changing the structure of how advising is offered could be considered to see whether a less structured approach could increase what advisors can do without compromising student success. For example, perhaps students in the School of Business or CHASS or the smaller schools do not need mandatory advising support across the board; releasing advisors from having to track each student and allowing them to focus more on the ones who may need additional support could be more productive given the amount of staffing available.

It may be that administrative tasks are partly or wholly replaced by programmatic responsibilities that expand the advisors’ role to be able to support students more holistically. In some of the schools, such as the School of Public Policy, School of Business, and the Graduate School of Education, for example, experiential opportunities are a key part of the students' academic careers, and the participation of and collaboration with academic advisors along with faculty to provide and administer such experiences could greatly benefit students.
Defining a shared understanding of academic advising and the role of advisors

Although there was widespread and near-unanimous acknowledgement of the importance of advising, it was sometimes clear that not everyone understood what academic advisors actually do beyond course selection and degree requirements, and how academic advising contributes to student success and retention. In many of the schools and colleges, there was little interaction between faculty and advisors, despite the fact that these are the two populations who most directly impact student retention. This lack of mutual understanding seems to have resulted in conflicting advice to students, or some mistrust (e.g., faculty take on advising for smaller majors). Thus, it would be extremely beneficial for faculty and advisors to find ways to collaborate and support students together in various ways. We observed significant strength in the relationship between faculty and professional advisors within the School of Business. Within this school, faculty and professional advisors’ relationship seemed to be based on shared values of student success, with collaborative endeavors leading to programs focused on student learning outcomes. Encouraging such collaborative relationships campus-wide, based on shared student success values instead of based on curricular scheduling and administrative work, will benefit not just the faculty and advisors, but students as well.

Before this can be done, it is imperative that academic advising and the role of advisors be clearly defined, and shared with campus partners in addition to faculty. See below in Communication and Collaboration for more detail and recommendations regarding this fundamental and critical need.

The distinction between academic advising and mentoring should be clearly made. Faculty can most impactfully support students by mentoring them on the discipline, curriculum, and career paths, and focusing on this – rather than the intricacies and logistical details of academic advising – would be a very fruitful and complementary partnership. One way to establish and clarify roles and responsibilities within academic advising would be to scale the work that has been done within CNAS in defining responsibilities as expressed in the CNAS Undergraduate Academic Advising Center Faculty Oversight Committee Advising Roles and Responsibilities (2019).\(^1\) Once defined, it will be crucial that all advisors and faculty mentors understand those responsibilities.

In speaking with other campus units, such as the Academic Resource Center, it seemed that beyond simply referring students to each other, advisors and the ARC do not really

\(^1\) Available at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VczBOLHU4d-Rpoqoq7ckY-7Ugvee34FdijeziweUTel/edit?usp=sharing.
work together, and therefore are less effective. Shared messaging, for example, about the importance of advising from ARC and about the importance of utilizing campus resources from advisors, could reinforce a partnership to better support students. It could be very useful for key leaders from the Dean of Students office, Financial Aid, the Registrar’s Office, ARC, and academic advising across the campus come together to look at how students navigate UCR from the student’s point of view, and to see what things can be done to facilitate and streamline that experience. Although decentralized functions are usually necessary for a campus the size of UCR, it is easy to forget that students tend to see all components as a single entity, for better or worse.

It did seem that in some areas, advisors were viewed as secondary or merely functional, such as being referred to as “student advisors,” rather than being seen as professional staff who advise students based on training and experience, or comments that advisors were no longer available “to take advantage of.” Thus, framing and presenting academic advising as a teaching and learning activity consistent with NACADA’s Concept of Advising, along with educating the wider campus of the complexities advisors handle along with messaging from campus leadership and faculty leaders regarding the importance of the role of advising could help reinforce its significance in supporting students. Advisors could also contribute to improved rebranding by seeking out allies among faculty and campus partners to share their vision and reinforce their importance.

Recommendations:

1. Increase advising FTE where possible, and to the extent possible.
2. Consider ways in which advisors can dedicate more time to advising
   a. Utilize undergraduate peer mentors/counselors to handle easier tasks
   b. Remove administrative tasks from the advising workload, such as enrollment management/scheduling, course articulations, and degree conferrals
   c. Consider whether case model approach is most effective for specific student populations
3. Collaboratively create campus wide advising vision; advising units should also create their own unit-specific mission, goals, and student learning objectives. This should be utilized to educate the broader campus about academic advising. Note that messaging from campus leadership is critical but cannot change anything without being reinforced at all levels and by various stakeholders.
4. Collaborate with campus partners to align messaging and better understand each other’s roles to support students more holistically.

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2 For NACADA’s Concept of Advising, see https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/Concept.aspx.
a. The UCR Advising Council can be an excellent means to achieve this.

5. Promote messaging and rebranding from all levels (from campus leadership down to individual advisors) to educate and reinforce the importance of advising and its status as a teaching and learning activity consistent with NACADA’s Concept of Advising, instead of a transactional administrative experience.

Communication & Collaboration

It was very clear from the review document that we were sent academic advising is well respected at UCR. However, it was also very clear that the decentralized model for advising has resulted in a lack of a clear vision, mission, and strategic goals for the university. While we recognized that in each School/College there are different experiences that are delivered by the academic advising professionals, there must be a foundation on which these experiences are grounded.

One thing that was not mentioned at all except in a random comment in one of the sessions was the UCR Advising Council, which has a huge potential to contribute to many of the areas above, including facilitating a campus-wide community of advisors with a broad vision of advising, rebranding academic advising and promoting messaging that educates the broader community on the importance of advising as well as what academic advisors really do (as opposed to what people think advisors do), and creating opportunities for collaborations with faculty and other campus partners to support students broadly and holistically. We would encourage the Advising Council to think beyond professional development for advisors which is essential and to consider how advising can positively and significantly impact the student experience at UC Riverside. The Advising Council should also explore how to gain greater visibility across the campus and the active support of campus leadership.

Thus, the UCR Advising Council must be charged with the development of the UCR vision, mission, and strategic goals for academic advising -- this must clearly define the role of academic advising at the university. The role of the Advising Council may need to be more clearly identified for its university-wide responsibilities and perhaps the members of the Advising Council may need to be reconstituted to include not just the SAMs but also front-line academic advisors, faculty, and other service units across campus such as orientation and admissions. Clearly the vision and mission for academic advising at UCR must focus on student success which will involve more careful collaboration and communication across the university.
A useful exercise might be for all of the various advising units from the different schools to contribute to this campus-wide advising vision. Each unit that does not already have one should also create its own mission, and goals, and student learning objectives. This exercise would create some unity and community for advisors across campus, while also establishing aspirational goals that would serve to educate the broader campus community about the role of academic advising. *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook* provides a valuable chapter written by Susan Campbell about developing mission statements (Campbell, 2011).

Communication concerning the academic advising experiences is very limited across the university and even within Schools/Colleges other registration and scheduling. Thus, the SAMS from all Schools/Colleges must meet at least quarterly in order to improve the communication and collaboration across the university. These regular meetings will be essential to reviewing policies and procedures but also to communicate the role of academic advising across the universities.

While communication can be improved across the university, as stated earlier, there is a lack of communication specifically in CHASS. We believe there was a very sound rationale for the reorganization in CHASS to better support academic advising. The reorganization in CHASS has resulted, though, in a very decentralized mode where students may not all be receiving the highest quality of academic advising possible. In addition, there are morale issues among both groups of CHASS advisors. We recommend that the SAMs and academic advising coordinators meet at least monthly in order to more carefully build a community of academic advising professionals. In order for the college academic advisors and the departmental academic advisors to become one clear academic advising community, the monthly meetings of the administrators must occur. The monthly meetings can open up lines of communication, plan college-wide professional development opportunities, and establish an assessment plan for academic advising across the college. We encourage a stronger communication between the departmental SAM, departmental advisors and the department chairs and faculty to ensure that the role academic advising plays for the students can be clearly identified.

**Recommendations:**

1. Create a campus-wide vision, mission, and goals for academic advising.
2. SAMs from the various Schools/Colleges should meet regularly.
3. CHASS SAMs and academic advising coordinators should meet monthly.
Organization and Structure

As discussed earlier, the decentralized model for academic advising at UCR provides the Schools/Colleges the opportunity for students to receive high quality academic advising based upon their programs of study. However, even in a decentralized model, it is essential that there must be an oversight of the university-wide academic advising program; without such an oversight, there can be no clear vision, mission, goals, assessment of academic advising at the university level, professional developmental across the campus, or a clear communication plan. Therefore, we strongly recommend that a new position entitled Executive Director or Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Advising be created and report directly to Dr. Jennifer Brown. While it would be imperative that the advising community be involved in the development of the job roles and in the search, we do feel strongly that it should report to Dr. Brown. This position should be responsible for academic advising across the campus. If possible, directors of advising units should report to this position at least in a dotted-line capacity, but if this is not possible, campus leadership should express support of this role to enable the position to be effective. UC Campuses with analogous positions include UC Santa Cruz (Assistant Vice Provost), UC Davis (Executive Director), UC Irvine (Executive Director), UC Berkeley (Manager of Advising Strategy and Training), and UC Los Angeles (Assistant Vice Provost). Jennifer Joslin, in “The Case for Strategic Academic Advising Management,” shares some compelling reasons why establishing a campus-wide approach is important, and a central position could support such an approach (Joslin, 2018).

Addressing inconsistencies in policies and processes, both within and across some schools

Inconsistencies in policies and processes were an issue raised in several different contexts. Various Schools/Colleges interpret and process policies differently. Some of these procedural differences are likely to be a function of how each advising unit is structured, and what processes work. From the student’s perspective, it can be confusing, particularly for a student who has switched schools. It is very clear that inconsistent advising policies will always demonstrate to students the University is not focused on being student centered, and that the rationale for such policies is not compelling.

It could be extremely useful for all of the directors/SAMs of the various Schools/College to meet regularly (at least quarterly, or several times a year) to share information and discuss policies and practices. While it is probably not possible, nor even desirable, for
each school to apply every policy uniformly, it could be both enlightening and helpful for the schools to meet and share their various policies and rationales. Although respect for the autonomy and authority of each school is important, it is quite possible that such a discussion could bring about greater uniformity, or at the very least, a clearer rationale for why a particular policy is handled differently in different schools. In addition, opportunities for advisors from across campus to get to know each other and understand each other’s roles, populations, and policies could greatly enhance both effective advising, especially when students often transition from one school to another or internally within CHASS, providing a smoother and more consistent experience.

Finally, given the number of students who transfer to and from CHASS, CNAS, and BCOE, we recommend that the leadership of those advising units convene to create and implement policies that are consistent and well understood by all parties to facilitate the process.

Clearly defining and allocating authority

Although this does not seem to be an issue in most of the Schools/Colleges, the recent restructuring of advising in CHASS does not appear to be accepted or working as effectively as it should and could. There appear to be three groups of stakeholders who are not currently in alignment to support student success together in complementary ways: College advisors, departmental advisors, and faculty. Indeed, it almost seemed as though the departmental advisors occupied a middle area, considered not as part of the College but also not aligned with departments. There seemed to be some conflict between departmental and College advisors, and the CHASS department chairs and faculty appeared to be very unhappy with the current configuration.

Some of the tension between departmental and College advisors seems to have arisen out of poorly or inconsistently defined areas of authority and autonomy, and historically from differences in classification and salary, which are no longer an issue. Our understanding is that the College advisors work with undeclared students, students in transition, and pre-business majors, and that departmental advisors work with students who have declared the major. Both groups of advisors advise students on their overall (general) degree requirements (e.g., breadth, residency, etc.), but only College advisors have the autonomy to approve exceptions for breadth, which seems as though it has resulted in some resentment. Thus, we would like to suggest exploring several different options: 1) have College advisors work with all students on breadth requirements and general regulations, and have departmental advisors with all students on major/minor requirements, with both groups working together to support students; or 2) allow departmental advisors autonomy to make exceptions on the requirements (including
breadth) that they advise students on. Please note that such authority may not necessarily be granted to advisors as *individuals*: one way to ensure consistency, fairness, and equity for all students might be to create a committee consisting of advisors from both groups who would review such petitions and make decisions, rather than individual advisors making exceptions in ways that might not be consistently and equitably applied.

Ultimately, the transition appears to have been somewhat difficult. Although the roles of advisors were fairly well defined (“College” and “departmental”), the rationale (supporting advisors’ professional development and evaluation by having them report to advising professionals who are well-versed in advising core competencies\(^3\) as well as how academic advising can and should support student success) does not seem not to have been conveyed effectively, leaving departments feeling as though they lost significant administrative and clerical resources without gaining comparable services and efficiency. Because departmental advisors no longer report to the departments, they are often not located near the departments and may not be as accessible as they were previously. Furthermore, the removal of administrative tasks such as scheduling and enrollment management from advisors’ responsibilities without the addition of staff to do these important tasks has deprived departments of valuable expertise, convenient consultation, and resources for handling these administrative tasks. In addition, since departmental advisors report to CHASS rather than to departments, there may be a sense that they are not “loyal” to the departments, and that they are no longer integrated and familiar with the specific curriculum. Finally, it has been challenging at times for CHASS to implement consistent policies across the departments when advisors, caught between CHASS and departments, sometimes turn to departments for support.

These factors all make it challenging for CHASS as a whole to support students effectively, and we recommend looking at the relationships between all three stakeholder groups in order to foster communication and collaboration more intentionally. First, it is imperative that departments understand the rationale behind the recent reorganization and how the structure better supports student success, both by messaging from campus leadership as well as from CHASS advising, and by implementing practices that demonstrate this. For example: consider implementing practices to enable departmental advisors to be more integrated with the department and intimately familiar with the curricula of the various majors they handle, even when they are not physically situated within the department. Involving faculty in the process of collaborating to accomplish this would achieve several different goals at the same

\(^3\) For NACADA’s Advising Core Competencies, see https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/CoreCompetencies.aspx.
time, including understanding what advisors do, creating relationships so that faculty feel more comfortable consulting advisors even if they are not physical proximal, having advisors be more familiar with the curriculum and thereby more able to contribute their expertise and knowledge in areas such as enrollment management and how curricular changes can affect the student experience, even while they are no longer handling such administrative tasks. In addition, we strongly recommend implementing practices that will integrate both CHASS and departmental advisors more closely, starting with collaboration between the directors that can contribute to the unit as a whole being more cohesive and working together.

Finally, students who are pre-business are advised by CHASS College advisors but then transition to the School of Business, and the experience does not appear to be a smooth transition for students, who often are not aware of where exactly their advising comes from. School of Business advisors need to have a greater role in the advising of lower-division students who intend to major in business, in order to support a foundation for their engagement and success. Greater collaboration with the School of Business, or preferably, having the School of Business work with this population directly from the beginning (rather than students starting in CHASS), could enhance success rates for students to be accepted into the major as well as providing a more consistent experience throughout their course of study. This may require some reallocation of advising resources to accommodate the shift. Furthermore, if such an approach is taken, it will be crucial to develop ways to support the transition of the current 40% of students who intend to major in Business but don’t ultimately qualify for the major.

Recommendations:

1. Create position of overall responsibility for academic advising at UCR.
2. Implement measures that promote greater unity and consistency, or at least understanding of and familiarity with, policies from various schools.
3. Implement specific measures to align all stakeholders in CHASS to understand each other’s roles.
4. Align pre-business advising with the School of Business.
Technology

A significant challenge to the effectiveness of academic advising at UC Riverside is the lack of campus-wide technology solutions to support advisors’ work. Advisors are using several different platforms to do their work, some of which are campus-level and others locally developed or purchased, and it seems that few if any of these systems interface with each other. This both creates inefficiency and results in an inconsistent student experience with advising. Struggling with existing technology is a significant draw on advisors’ time, resulting in their having less time to spend with students. UCR’s continuing success in retaining and graduating students from historically marginalized populations will rely on advisors having time to talk with students about their educational goals, aspirations, and challenges instead of spending their time struggling with technology.

A separate but related issue is the difficulty advising offices have in accessing reliable data. Several of the people we talked with mentioned the increased difficulty in accessing data since the implementation of Cognos, and we heard several accounts of the data that is accessible not being accurate. An intentional and data-driven academic advising program relies on having access to timely and accurate data, both so that advisors can appropriately identify students who would benefit from targeted and proactive outreach, and so that the effectiveness of academic advising can be appropriately assessed. It is nearly impossible to do the proactive work necessary to support UCR’s diverse population without access to timely, accurate, and appropriate data.

Besides access to data, an understanding of how to use data to assess advising effectiveness and to improve student outcomes is important. The review team was impressed with the data-driven approach illustrated in the CNAS self-study, and was particularly interested in the recently developed “Data Boot Camp” training. Assessing the effectiveness of this training and possibly scaling it to a large number of staff and faculty who support student success would be a way to support a data-driven and intentional academic advising culture.

Given the importance of technology and data in supporting an effective advising program, and the challenges that were expressed in all units, we strongly recommend that a two-to-three year campus-wide plan be developed to prioritize, fund, and implement technical and data solutions. This plan should be developed as a collaborative partnership between the campus-level advising leadership position (if hired) and the campus IT department, with broad consultation with advising offices. If
the campus-level advising leadership position is not implemented, the collaboration should involve the advising directors from all colleges and schools and campus IT.

A campus-level CRM that includes appointment scheduling functionality could support student progress by providing a tool through which advising offices could more efficiently and proactively engage with students, and this priority may emerge from the two-to-three year plan discussed above. Such an endeavor would require significant ongoing costs and may not be possible in the current budgetary climate. If chosen and implemented carefully, however, it could save the university by saving hours of staff time that is now spent struggling with existing technology. We suggest that, if this surfaces as a top priority within the two-to-three year technology plan, it be prioritized as budgetary resources improve. If this avenue is pursued, it will be absolutely crucial to involve advising directors and staff in the review and implementation process from the beginning to ensure effective implementation.

Although the acquisition of Ellucian Banner/ Degree Works was likely intended in part to support advisors’ work, it seems that there was a lack of communication with advising stakeholders at the time the system was implemented - the functionality as currently implemented does not support and is not consistent with the work advisors do. Since significant resources were likely committed to implement the system, it would be a benefit to the campus to identify ways in which to make the system work for students and advisors. One way to do this is to formally open lines of communication between advising offices and ITS, ensuring that staff who are purchasing and implementing systems understand the type of work advising offices do to support student success, and that advising staff and directors have an opportunity to provide input at important decision-making points. Working with campus institutional research offices could also be a way to obtain data for large scale questions as an interim measure while more permanent and easily accessible methods of obtaining data are pursued.

Finally, it may be necessary to manage expectations around technology. A number of people pointed out that having to utilize different applications to access different types of data was time consuming and inconvenient. However, it is not likely that a single platform will provide all of the information that advisors need to work with students, particularly when utilizing commercial products that must be customized to campus needs. Commercial products are more likely to provide solutions for specific areas but are unlikely to be able to do everything desired at the level needed to be utilized effectively.

**Recommendations:**
1. Through a collaborative partnership between advising leadership and the campus IT department, develop a 2-3 year plan to prioritize, fund, and implement technical and data solutions at the campus level.

2. Provide academic advising with a central and definitive source of student data. Ideally, reports should be written, with the input of and testing by advisors to ensure their accuracy, that could include prompts to allow use by all academic advising offices. We also recommend central support and adoption for the “Advisor Facing Dashboard” proposal suggested by CNAS on page 135 of the self-study.

3. Open lines of communication between academic advising and the offices acquiring and implementing technology solutions. This could be done by establishing a group with advising and ITS representatives (and including other relevant stakeholders such as the Registrar’s Office or campus institutional research unit) that meet monthly to better understand and address technical barriers to advisors’ work. Involve advising offices in the evaluation and implementation process of any new technology designed to support their work.

4. Consider acquiring and implementing a campus-level technology solution that includes both a CRM and functionality for appointment scheduling. If a campus-level technology solution is prioritized and acquired, all academic advising offices should be required to use the new technology to ensure a consistent experience for students. This will require broad consultation, since several offices have developed local solutions and may lose some functionality, even as the larger campus and student population will benefit from new tools.

5. Scale the “Data Boot Camp” training established by CNAS to all academic advising offices.
Assessment

Several colleges included data and survey results in the self-study provided, and it is clear there is a value placed on a data-driven approach to assessing the effectiveness of academic advising at UCR. Individual advising units seem committed to continuous improvement in their work, and in particular CNAS provided several measures of effectiveness in the self-study provided. Several of the advising programs are already using student surveys to better understand student satisfaction with advising, and this is one important element to assessment. It is important, however, to identify ways to assess advising effectiveness at the campus level.

The lack of campus-wide goals and student learning objectives for advising, along with the difficulty accessing accurate data, make it difficult to pursue a comprehensive assessment of academic advising’s effectiveness at the campus level. The “Staffing” section of this report includes a recommendation to establish campus-wide mission, goals, and student learning objectives. As in teaching, student learning objectives will help to define success metrics, and will form a basis for assessment of the advising program.

NACADA provides several resources\(^4\) for developing assessment plans for advising. In addition, each year NACADA runs an Assessment Institute\(^5\), which is quite affordable this year given its remote delivery. Sending a team of SAMs and other relevant stakeholders (which might include relevant individuals from the campus Institutional Research or other data-providing offices) to the Assessment Institute could be an effective approach to the development of a campus-wide approach to advising assessment, and could also serve to support some of the other goals suggested in this report by developing a stronger communication and team approach.

Recommendations:

1. Recommendations in other sections of this report, including the development of campus-wide mission, goals, and student learning objectives; and stronger access to student data, will also support advising assessment.
2. Consider sending a team of SAMS and other professionals to the NACADA Assessment Institute.

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\(^4\) For resources, see https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/Assessment.aspx.

\(^5\) Information about NACADA’s Assessment Institute can be found at https://nacada.ksu.edu/Events/Assessment-Institute.aspx.
Conclusion

Academic advising at UC Riverside is very strong and highly regarded, and it is clear that they are greatly appreciated by students, colleagues, and faculty across the campus. To sustain UC Riverside’s success with a highly diverse undergraduate population, it will be important to maintain a focus on high quality academic advising to support retention and graduation rates, and equity of outcomes. We hope the above recommendations will help provide even better services to improve the student experience at UCR by considering some possible restructuring and streamlining some processes and procedures to increase efficiency in a time of economic uncertainty. We are happy to remain available should there be additional questions about our observations or recommendations.
Contact Information

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References and Resources


Appendix A: Summary of Recommendations

Staffing

1. Increase advising FTE where possible, and to the extent possible.
2. Consider ways in which advisors can dedicate more time to advising
   a. Utilize undergraduate peer mentors/counselors to handle easier tasks
   b. Remove administrative tasks from the advising workload, such as enrollment management/scheduling, course articulations, and degree conferrals
   c. Consider whether case model approach is most effective for specific student populations
3. Collaboratively create campus wide advising vision; advising units should also create their own unit-specific mission and goals. This should be utilized to educate the broader campus about academic advising. Note that messaging from campus leadership is critical but cannot change anything without being reinforced at all levels and by various stakeholders.
4. Collaborate with campus partners to align messaging and better understand each other’s roles to support students more holistically.
   a. The UCR Advising Council can be an excellent means to achieve this.
5. Promote messaging and rebranding from all levels (from campus leadership down to individual advisors) to educate and reinforce the importance of advising and its status as a teaching and learning activity consistent with NACADA’s Concept of Advising, instead of a transactional administrative experience.

Communication and Collaboration

1. Create a campus-wide vision, mission, and goals for academic advising.
2. SAMs from the various Schools/Colleges should meet regularly.
3. CHASS SAMs and academic advising coordinators should meet monthly.

Organization and Structure

1. Create a position with overall responsibility for academic advising at UCR.
2. Implement measures that promote greater unity and consistency, or at least understanding of and familiarity with, policies from various schools.
3. Implement specific measures to align all stakeholders in CHASS to understand each other’s roles.
Technology

1. Through a collaborative partnership between advising leadership and the campus IT department, develop a 2-3 year plan to prioritize, fund, and implement technical and data solutions at the campus level.

2. Provide academic advising with a central and definitive source of student data. Ideally, reports should be written, with the input of and testing by advisors to ensure their accuracy, that could include prompts to allow use by all academic advising offices. We also recommend central support and adoption for the “Advisor Facing Dashboard” proposal suggested by CNAS on page 135 of the self-study.

3. Open lines of communication between academic advising and the offices acquiring and implementing technology solutions. This could be done by establishing a group with advising and ITS representatives (and including other relevant stakeholders such as the Registrar’s Office) that meet monthly to better understand and address technical barriers to advisors’ work. Involve advising offices in the evaluation and implementation process of any new technology designed to support their work.

   Consider acquiring and implementing a campus-level technology solution that includes both a CRM and functionality for appointment scheduling. If a campus-level technology solution is prioritized and acquired, all academic advising offices should be required to use the new technology to ensure a consistent experience for students. This will require broad consultation, since several offices have developed local solutions and may lose some functionality, even as the larger campus and student population will benefit from new tools.

4. Scale the “Data Boot Camp” training established by CNAS to all academic advising offices.

Assessment

1. Recommendations in other sections of this report, including the development of campus-wide mission, goals, and student learning objectives; and stronger access to student data, will also support advising assessment.

2. Consider sending a team of SAMS and other professionals to the NACADA Assessment Institute.
Appendix B: Guidelines and Questions for the Review Team

We are interested in your overall assessment of the accomplishments and potential of academic advising at UCR (referred to herein as the “program”). The charge to the reviewer is to evaluate the program in light of its objectives, as well as to make explicit comparison of our program with comparable programs at other major universities. Recommendations to increase resources or to make more efficient use of current resources may follow from your evaluation, but are not in themselves the primary responsibility of the reviewers.

It might be helpful to think of your review with the following questions in mind:

1. What is the overall quality of academic advising?
2. Are operations and services adequate in scope and depth to ensure appropriate service to students?
3. Are the program's objectives and success metrics clear and explicit?
4. Do the assessment results suggest that the program is successfully attaining its objectives?
5. Is there evidence that the program has reflected on its assessment results and makes use of them in a continuous improvement process?
6. Would your home campus view this as a high quality program?
7. Does the program have a compelling, workable, long-range plan that will allow it to continue to provide high quality service to the institution in the future? If not, what do you suggest?
8. Where should UCR focus its efforts to improve academic advising?
9. How do stakeholders feel about academic advising services?
10. Do the current administrative structures and supporting services/facilities at UCR foster or hinder the success of the program?
11. Is there sufficient interaction between academic advising and any other campus programs with which it should interact? Are there closely related units at UCR or other campuses (UC or non-UC) with which more collaboration should be undertaken?
12. Is there any question we have not asked that you feel should be addressed?

We intend these guidelines to be suggested topics that you may want to pursue rather than prescriptions for the process. As an External Reviewer, you should feel entirely free to pursue whatever avenues of investigation will yield constructive and relevant insights. We hope to obtain well thought-out and forthright judgments of where we
stand, so that UCR may best capitalize on its strengths and take effective steps to correct weaknesses. The Provost/EVC will give serious consideration to whatever directions you believe to be most worthwhile. Any questions concerning the review should be directed to the Provost/EVC.
## Appendix C: Schedule of Consultations

### DAY 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:45</td>
<td>Review Charge Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:45</td>
<td>Faculty Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:00</td>
<td>Associate Deans (Advising)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-12:00</td>
<td>College/School Deans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Lunch Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:45</td>
<td>On-Campus Collaborators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bourns College of Engineering (BCOE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:00-2:25</td>
<td>Student Advising Manager (SAM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:10</td>
<td>Advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15-4:00</td>
<td>Department Chairs/Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-4:15</td>
<td>Break</td>
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**College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:15-4:45</td>
<td>Student Advising Managers (SAMs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45-5:30</td>
<td>Advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30-6:15</td>
<td>Department Chairs/Faculty</td>
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### DAY 2

**School of Business**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:20</td>
<td>Student Advising Manager (SAM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:10</td>
<td>Advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20-10:00</td>
<td>Department Chairs/Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Graduate School of Education (GSOE)**

**School of Public Policy (SPP)**
10:30-10:50  Student Advising Manager (SAM) - GSOE
10:50-11:10  Student Advising Manager (SAM) - SPP
11:15-11:50  Advisors
11:50-12:30  Department Chairs/Faculty
12:30-1:30   Lunch

College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (CNAS)
1:30-2:00    Student Advising Managers (SAMs)
2:00-2:40    Advisors
2:45-3:30    Department Chairs/Faculty
3:30-4:00    Break
4:00-5:00    Students - Session 1

DAY 3
9:00-10:00   Students - Session 2
10:00-11:00  Committee Work
11:00-12:00  Exit Interview/Report Out