

Academic Advising Proposed Pilot Model for BCC - Senate Recommendation 3-19-2014

The purpose of academic advising is to help students select a program of study to meet life and vocational goals. The Academic Senate of BCC recommends that the college pilots an advising model that will aid in exploring the possibilities of providing various and eclectic methods to assist students toward these goals. The advising pilot program will address students' life, academic, and career/vocational goals which are prerequisites to their identifying a program of choice. The pilot will include specific and intentional counseling and instructional contact opportunities for students as well several other possible opportunities for advisement throughout the academic year.

Non-counseling instructional faculty shall be referred to as Academic Advisors. Through Academic Senate and PFT1603 consultation, formal agreements shall be created between the college and those faculty members volunteering to participate as Academic Advisors during the piloting period. The formal agreement shall make explicit details such as the description of Academic Advisors' roles and duties as well as compensation plans.

During the terms in which the advising model will be piloted, the scope of work is to be defined and listed in the following areas:

Exploration of Life Goals and Vocational Goals

1. Counseling and participating instructional faculty from the disciplines will develop a veritable referral process utilizing informative, user-friendly prescribed forms. Training to streamline who and where to refer when is in order and will be collaboratively developed and documented. During the student's first year, the referral process should be active in order to foster proactive involvement on the part of all parties.
2. Designated counselors for program disciplines to work as specific liaisons with instructional advisors/mentors¹.

Program Choice

1. Academic Advisors from the disciplines will develop advisement sheets that include the career pathways, Associate Degrees for Transfer information, employment outlooks, major preparatory coursework, necessary skills, professional associations, websites.
2. The Counseling Department in collaboration with the Academic Advisors from the disciplines will produce and participate in workshops, career fairs, and orientations. To be included in their formal agreement of participation, Academic Advisors are expected to attend or designate an attendee for these events.

¹ This requires an re-organization of the Counseling department.

3. Academic Advisors will create FAQs for their discipline for publication and distribution throughout the campus. Counseling faculty will distribute the FAQs when they meet with students.
4. Academic Advisors will facilitate and conduct informational interviews.

Choose Courses

1. Academic Advisors will advise students on developmental/prerequisite coursework necessary to be successful in discipline and/or transfer level coursework.
2. Counselors will work with the office of instruction to coordinate and schedule classroom visits to do information sessions on general education breadth to the maximum number of first year students possible.
3. Designated counselor liaisons to disciplines will attend department meetings to learn particulars of discipline and share pertinent information.
4. The Counseling department will maintain a counseling representative on the college Curriculum Committee.
5. Academic Advisors may be called upon to attend Counseling department meetings to share pertinent information not available during the departmental meetings at the beginning of the term.

Schedule Courses

Academic Advisors should mentor and advise students **only** with respect to the requirements for the major for AA/AS degrees and certificates. Course planning and scheduling details such as blending GE with major preparation, creating manageable and balanced schedules, requirement nuances as transfer institutions, etc. are strictly functions of the Counseling department faculty.

Counseling faculty and Academic Advisors will also work in collaboration with the college Learning Assessment Coordinator to create formative and summative assessment tools to be used to inform the development of the pilot; professional development, and potential expansion of the voluntary advising model after a three-term piloting period. (This follows the current policy regarding new experimental curriculum development.)

References:

"Be Advised" Community College Journal (October/November 2012).

"Role of Counseling Faculty and Delivery of Counseling Services" Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges. Adopted Spring 2012.

Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, (SB1440, Padilla)

Berkeley City College Counseling Department

Studies have shown that students do best when the educational institution is able to portray a true sense of commitment and involvement in the student's educational experience. Collaboration between counseling and instructional faculty is one of the primary necessary criteria towards this end. There are proposals to develop an instructional Faculty Advising Model to supplement the services that students receive from their Counseling Department.

Instructional Faculty Advisors should not be assigned to this important role but instead should have an interest in serving in this capacity. Furthermore, Instructional Faculty Advisors should only work with students who have identified a goal and advise these students within their area of discipline.

Tasks that fall under the scope of "Instructional Faculty Advisors":

- Academic
 - Update students on curriculum changes in the major
 - Identify coursework necessary for students to succeed and develop in the major
 - Provide updates to students on their progress in the major requirements
 - Guide students through the Course Substitution/Waiver process
 - Advise students about college choices appropriate for selected major
- Career
 - Advise students on career opportunities connected to the discipline
 - Discuss skill sets required for the discipline
 - Advise if the major is the appropriate fit for student
 - Provide job market expertise
 - Provide info on internships and volunteer opportunities in the field
- Referrals
 - Refer students to counselors for general education coursework, transfer, petition for graduation, exploration of any kind, discussions of real and/or perceived obstacles
 - Refer students to appropriate on-campus programs and/or resources

needs and other areas that contribute to academic success. When a student's need for counseling extends beyond academic or career counseling, and in some cases requires resources outside the scope of services of the counseling department, counseling faculty are trained to make appropriate referrals.

ROLES AND USES OF PARAPROFESSIONALS AND FACULTY ADVISORS

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Paraprofessionals (also called counselor assistants, information technicians, educational advisors, or specialists) have for some time been employed by universities, where student needs are less varied and goals are more uniform, and now there is a call for wider use of these paraprofessionals in California community college counseling departments. Use of paraprofessionals continues to grow despite ongoing concern they might be pressed into roles beyond their job duties and for which they may not be qualified. Paraprofessionals can support counseling faculty and students, just as instructional assistants help instructional faculty in the classroom, provided that paraprofessionals are performing functions within the scope of their defined roles.

The amount of education or experience required of paraprofessionals has not been established at the state level. Districts hiring paraprofessionals have historically set their own standards. These standards have varied with the nature of the tasks required of the position. Frequently, the paraprofessional is someone who possesses an associate or bachelor's degree and may have student services experience. Paraprofessionals might also be community college or university students. While the specific qualifications for a given position might differ, three crucial issues must be considered when developing a job description: first, with the full participation of counseling faculty, the competencies expected of paraprofessionals need to be explicitly defined; second, paraprofessionals need to be trained and supervised carefully with full participation of counseling faculty; and last, that paraprofessionals not be expected or allowed to perform tasks beyond their job duties and specified qualifications.

To identify the appropriate roles of paraprofessionals, colleges must clarify the activities that do not require the minimum qualifications of the counseling discipline. The following is a list of such possible activities:

1. Assisting at registration by providing information and referring students to campus offices and services. This information might include important dates and deadlines, how to read a class schedule, or how to navigate an enterprise software system. Paraprofessionals can also assist students in scheduling classes once the student education plan has been developed by counseling faculty.
2. Providing information about program requirements: Many counseling departments prepare materials about college programs to help students plan their schedules. Paraprofessionals could disseminate this information.
3. Facilitating and supporting activities: There are many useful activities that paraprofessionals could provide in Transfer Centers, Career Centers, Assessment Centers, Disabled Student Programs, Veteran's Resource Centers, and Extended Opportunity Programs. They might assist students in using

reference materials or electronic career information, coordinate university tours or visits by university representatives, design and organize advertising for counseling center activities, make classroom presentations to students about the services of various campus offices and programs, disseminate placement test results as long as interpretation of the results is left to counseling faculty, or assist with community outreach such as visits to high schools.

Counseling faculty must clarify the limits on the use of paraprofessionals in order to protect the integrity of the counseling discipline. When activities with student go beyond providing specifically required information and migrate into the areas of goal setting, planning, and decision-making, the student needs to be referred to a counseling faculty member. What may have begun with a routine question about a course may quickly lead to the explanations for the choice, the career goals associated with that choice, or the appropriateness of the major, program, or transfer institution. The responsibility for addressing these situations is within the scope of the established minimum qualifications for counseling faculty and is beyond not only the job duties of paraprofessionals but also often beyond their competencies and qualifications.

Institutions must ensure that paraprofessionals are not allowed to venture into academic counseling where they would be called upon to interpret, advise, or judge the appropriateness of a student's course or program choice, since these activities are beyond the scope of their jobs. For this reason, paraprofessionals should not advise undeclared students or students on probation, nor should they produce student education plans.

Furthermore, interpreting assessment results for students or weighing multiple measures for course placement are also not appropriate activities for paraprofessionals. Such interpretations require knowledge of assessment methods and the use of professional judgment, which belong properly with faculty trained to perform these functions.

The following Academic Senate adopted resolutions support counseling faculty in their insistence that paraprofessional hiring follow academic senate sponsored guidelines:

15.01 F93 Counseling Service Standards

8.01 S98 Use of Paraprofessionals to Perform Counseling Activities

8.02 S99 Appropriate Uses of Paraprofessionals

8.01 S01 Use of Paraprofessionals

8.01 S10 Commitment to Established Principles and Guidelines Regarding Use of Paraprofessionals

8.01 S11 Title 5 Change to Clarify the Role of Advisors and Paraprofessionals in Counseling

8.01 F11 Update Senate Paper on the Role of Counseling Faculty in California Community Colleges

The Rostrum article "When Are Counseling Paraprofessionals Appropriate? A Friendly Reminder" (March 2010) also serves to remind interested parties of the strong positions taken by the Academic Senate.

NON-COUNSELING FACULTY ADVISORS

One well-published key to retention is a student's sense that the institution is interested in his or her success. Non-counseling faculty can play an important advising role and serve as a vehicle to express that interest, provided the advising does not expand to functions reserved for counseling faculty. Faculty advisors should

have the minimum qualifications to teach in the subject area in which they provide advising and should exhibit the following competencies:

- › ability to interact non-judgmentally with students using effective helping skills
- › interest in serving as an advisor (no one should be assigned advising responsibilities automatically).

Activities within the scope of faculty advisors are the following:

1. Providing information regarding programs, career opportunities, and course selection in their disciplines.
2. Referring students to appropriate services: the faculty advisor can provide a link for the student with other essential services: counseling, financial aid, career center, veteran's resource center, services for students with disabilities, tutoring center, health center, etc. Faculty advisor training must include learning to recognize when referrals back to counseling are necessary.
3. Coordinating with counseling departments: non-counseling faculty are excellent resources for discipline-related information; counseling faculty can provide comprehensive training on skills and strategies necessary for successful advising. Instructors who advise and the counselors who train them share the responsibility to make faculty-advising activities a supplement to, rather than a replacement for, counseling services.

Counseling departments should develop a clear written process for engaging faculty advisors as well as provide sufficient training for the advisor to be successful. All parties must understand the following distinctions between counseling and advising and understand that faculty advisors are clear about circumstances under which they must refer a student to a counselor:

- › **Advising** focuses on giving students the information they need to reach their stated goals. Advisors explain and clarify this information for students and present their material in a manner sympathetic to the needs and situation of the student. Advising responds to student requests for discipline-specific information.
- › **Counseling** is required when the student needs more than just specific information. When goals are not yet set, when decisions are not yet made, or when the problem goes beyond a need for data, the student needs counseling. In this context, advisors should not advise undecided or probationary students who, by the nature of their situation, require counseling. Nor is it appropriate for advisors to be called counselors. This practice only adds to the confusion of students about the roles of the individuals serving them.

Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty Advising

1. How many degrees/certificates are in your discipline?
2. How many units are in the core major requirements?
3. Who are the instructors in the discipline? (Ask departments to make handout of instructors and office hours)
4. Are there certain courses offered in the fall/spring semester only?
5. Can I transfer courses from another college to this major at BCC?
6. Can I use my AP/IB/CLEP credits for courses in this discipline?
7. What are some of the common career paths for people studying this major?
8. Where can I go to get information about this major?
9. Where can I find information on internships/volunteer opportunities
10. What type of students do well in this major?
11. Does the major offer distance education?
12. Does the four year institution offer online courses for this major?
13. Does your discipline sponsor campus-wide informational events?
14. Who is the counseling liaison for your discipline?
15. Are there student clubs related to the major or campus-wide activities?