I. Departmental History

The Academic Advising Center was established in January 2005 under the guidance of the Vice Provost office. The purpose of the Center was to work with each of the six undergraduate colleges along with Career Services to assist undergraduate students who had neither declared an academic major nor made a college affiliation. The Center was also developed to assist current students in transition between colleges or undergraduate majors.

The Academic Advising Center has grown tremendously since January 2005. The Center was initially established with a coordinator and two academic advisors. Today, we have a director, associate director, two academic advisors, three advisor/counselors, a student support specialist, two office support staff, two graduate assistants, and three Exploring Majors House leaders. We currently serve over 650 declared AAC students and approximately 250 students in transition.

Along with the growth of the AAC, there have been many changes in the physical location and leadership of the unit. Since its inception, the Center has had four directors and three office locations. Its first director, Michael “Brody” Broshears established the unit starting in October 2004. At that time the Academic Advising Center shared an office space and one office support specialist with the former Office of Retention Programs in the Campus Life Building room 120. Currently, the Center is housed in its own building and a permanent director, Michelle Pickett, has been in place since May 2011.

II. Mission, Objectives & Goals

A. Mission
   
i. The AAC advises students as they develop meaningful academic plans compatible with their educational and life goals. The AAC serves “undecided” students, students seeking alternative majors, and students reassessing their current academic situation. We also support the distinct nature of advising within the colleges and academic departments at NIU.

B. Objectives/Goals
   
i. Increase the retention rates for students who begin with the AAC and for 3rd/4th semester CHANCE students.
   
ii. Increase the number of AAC students who declare a major no later than the end of 4th semester of enrollment or junior standing (earned 60 credit hours).
   
iii. Reduce the number and percentage of AAC students who are placed on probation/dismissed annually.
   
iv. Increase student learning as identified in the “AAC Academic Advising Goals and Student Learning Objectives”.
   
v. Continue to increase student satisfaction with services provided by the AAC staff as evidenced by the AAC spring survey results and the Orientation evaluation feedback.
   
vi. Increase the awareness of the importance of academic advising to student success among campus constituents.
III. Methods
   A. Student Support
      i. Student Characteristics
         1. ACT/HS rank of AAC students: Information on these two characteristics
            would be collected from Testing Services and utilized when analyzing overall
            performance of AAC students from semester to semester and could also be used
            in comparison to the profile of students within other undergraduate colleges.
            The Director of the AAC will work with Director of Testing Services to gather
            this information. **This method addresses objectives B-i, B-ii, and B-iii.**
         2. Retention/migration/graduation rates of AAC students: Information on these
            two characteristics would be compiled with the assistance of Dr. Gregory Baker
            (Testing Services) and Vice Provost Dr. Anne Birberick. This information
            would be used in overall program effectiveness. **This method addresses
            objectives B-i, B-ii, B-iii, and B-iv.**
      ii. Orientation Evaluation Summary: Each summer, the Orientation and First-Year
            Experience office shares evaluation information with the six undergraduate colleges
            and the AAC regarding family members’ and students’ orientation programs. This
            evaluation includes the questions listed below for the students and family members:
            1. Orientation evaluations
               a. Student
                  i. The college representative thoroughly explained the degree
                     requirements for my major/program.
                  ii. My adviser was helpful and service oriented.
                  iii. My adviser thoroughly answered my questions and concerns.
                  iv. I spent a sufficient amount of time with my adviser.
                  v. I am comfortable consulting my adviser in the future.
               b. Family
                  i. The college dean or advising center representative provided an
                     informative overview of the college or unit.
                  ii. I gained a better understanding of the academic expectations of
                     my student's major college/unit.
            The results of this survey are sent to the Director every couple weeks in the months of June through August.
            These results are used to assess the overall effectiveness of the program provided by the Academic Advising
            Center. **This method addresses objectives B-iv, B-v.**
      iii. Student contact
            1. AAC Annual Survey: Each spring, those students that utilized the services of
               the Academic Advising Center will be sent a survey that asks to evaluate their
               experience with the AAC. Our Associate Director is currently the person
               responsible for developing the instrument and analyzing the results, although
               the entire office has reviewed results and made suggestions for programmatic
               and survey improvements based on responses. **This survey addresses
               objectives B-i, B-ii, B-iv, and B-v.**
            2. Exploring Majors House: The Exploring Majors House is a living-learning
               community in Grant South residence halls for undecided freshman. It was
               established in the fall of 2006 on three floors of Grant South B-tower. Various
               academic and social programs are offered throughout the academic year to
               assist students in their adjustment to campus. The programs are designed to aid
               students in major and career exploration. Each spring, the Associate Director
conducts a survey to determine what students have learned as well as their academic success at NIU. **This survey addresses objectives B-i, B-ii, B-iii, B-iv, and B-v.**

3. **AAC Satellite office:** The AAC Satellite office was established in 2005 and is housed in the lower level of Grant South B-tower. It was created in an effort to connect with students in their living environment. It was also a valuable resource for students who lived in the Exploring Majors House and Grant South residence halls. Each year, the **Associate Director and AAC advisor/counselor** Colette Maher, evaluate office usage though student appointments scheduled in the satellite office. **This item addresses objectives B-iv and B-v.**

4. **Student Usage and Office Traffic:** Information on the number of students utilizing the AAC, the AAC Satellite office (in Grant), those attending orientation programs, and those persons contacting the office will be collected on a regular basis. **AAC advisor/counselor**, Colette Maher, is responsible for the AAC database and works with the Director to report this information to the Vice Provost. **This method addresses objectives B-i, B-ii, B-iii, B-iv, and B-v.**

iv. **Classes & Workshops**

1. **LTRE 190:** A special section of LTRE 190 (College Reading Strategies and Study Skills) was developed to establish a resource for students in academic difficulty that would allow them to develop strong college reading and study skills. A one credit hour version of this course was established in the fall of 2009. The course was team-taught by the AAC Director and the Director of College Learning and Enhancement in the College of Education’s Department of Literacy. The **Director** is responsible for this project. **This method addresses objectives B-i, B-iii, B-iv, and B-v.**

2. **Themed Learning Communities:** In collaboration with the Office of Student Engagement and Experimental Learning (OSEEL), the AAC has offered Themed Learning Communities aimed toward incoming undecided freshmen. The AAC TLC titled “Major Exploration” was first offered in the fall of 2009. It paired the following courses: COMS 100, ENGL 103, and UNIV 101. This TLC was again offered in the fall 2011. Faculty from the respective departments taught the COMS and ENGL courses. **AAC advisor/counselor**, Colette Maher, taught the UNIV 101 course. She also completed an evaluation of student performance. **This method addresses objectives B-i, B-ii, B-iv, and B-v.**

3. **UNIV 101/201 sections taught by AAC advisors:** Staring in the fall 2007, AAC advisors have taught special sections of UNIV 101 for undecided students. At that time four sections of UNIV 101 were taught. Currently, we offer six sections taught by AAC advisors; three for undecided students, one for African American women and one as part of the TLC. In the fall 2011, a transfer section (UNIV 201) was also introduced. Furthermore, a survey was created to determine the impact of a student’s academic advisor teach an introduction to the university course. **AAC advisor/counselors** (Beverly McCall and Susana Das Neves) are responsible for this survey. **This method addresses objectives B-i, B-iv, and B-v.**
4. Workshops
   a. Pre-registration workshops: The pre-registration workshops were developed in the fall 2008 to assist students in preparing to register for spring classes. AAC advisor (Mazen Nagi) is responsible for this program. These workshops were offered in Stevens Annex computer lab to all first-year students. This method addresses objectives B-i, B-iv, and B-v.

   b. Academic Success workshops: These workshops were developed in the spring 2011 semester to address those students who may be in or near academic difficulty. AAC Students whose cumulative NIU GPA is 2.25 or below are required to attend these workshops to address the academic skills they need to be successful in their major exploration and selection. AAC advisor (Mazen Nagi) was responsible for this program. Starting spring 2012, the new Student Support Specialist, Amy Horn will be responsible for this program. This method addresses objectives B-i, B-iii, B-iv, and B-v.

B. Campus Support of Academic Advising
   i. AAC/Career Services presentations to UNIV 101/201 classes: In the fall 2006, the Academic Advising Center and Career Services offices have developed and implemented a joint presentation to UNIV 101 and 201 classes. Advisors from the AAC and Career Services staff developed an evaluation tool that was given to all students that attended these presentations. The AAC and Career Services has reviewed these results to determine if the presentation is meeting stated goals and to adapt future presentations to better meet the needs of this population. AAC advisor (Mazen Nagi) is responsible for this program. This method addresses objective B-i, B-ii, B-iv, B-v, and B-vi.

   ii. Annual Advising Summit: This event is an annual advisor training program for NIU academic advisors. It is funded from NIU Strategic Planning funds. The Director of the AAC is charged with coordinating this event. The first summit was held in the spring 2008 semester in the HSC Diversions Lounge and 54 advisors participated. Since then, the program has grown in both size and participation. The Third Annual Advising Summit was held on September 22, 2011 and 82 advisors participated. Session included Building Your Advising Toolbox, Advising Today’s Student, and a Department/Faculty Advisor Roundtable on how Career Services can help advisors work with students. Each year, participants complete a program survey which evaluates what they learned from the program. This method addresses objective B-vi.

   iii. Exploring Majors Fair: Since fall 2005, the Academic Advising Center has put on the Exploring Majors Fair. The Associate Director developed two separate evaluation tools, one for students attending the Fair, and one for department staff and faculty at the Fair. The Associate Director reviews these evaluations to explore program strengths and possible improvements. This method addresses objective B-vi.

   iv. MidSemester Check: MidSemester Check (MSC) began in the fall 2008 semester and has since been offered in the following semesters: Spring 2009, Fall 2009, Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, & Fall 2011. Originally, the program was coordinated by the ACCESS office. However, it was moved to the Academic Advising Center for spring 2009, fall 2009, and spring 2010. In fall 2010, the program moved to the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) where it is also funded. The program is now offered as a fall semester only event due to the creation of new another event coordinated and funded by OSAS, Destination Graduation, which began in spring 2011
and will be offered each spring semester. While the program was coordinated by the AAC, AAC advisor (Jonathon Ferguson) was responsible for this program. This method addresses objective B-vi.

v. University Advising Resource Guide: In 2005 the Academic Advising Center created a resource that would help students identify campus advising and student support offices. Therefore, the AAC created the Undergraduate Academic Advising Resources Brochure which identifies these resources. Each spring the Associate Director updates the brochure and distributes it to both students and offices that assist students. This method addresses objective B-vi.

C. AAC Infrastructure
   i. Advising Staff
      1. Advisors
      2. Advisor/Counselors: in June 2007, the AAC hired three new full-time advisors with the goal of providing advising for 3rd and 4th semester CHANCE students while assisting the current advisors with the mission of the Center.
   ii. Organizational Chart (see Attachment E.)
   iii. Staff activities: Information on how time is spent in the AAC along with what additional responsibilities are being performed by all staff members will be collected through annual performance reviews. The Director of the AAC will gather this information and share with Vice Provost Anne Birberick. This method addresses goal B-vi, B-v, and B-vi.
   iv. Faculty Oversight Committee: This is a body of faculty and representatives of the various undergraduate colleges, and experienced advisors with jurisdiction over certain academic affairs. This body is responsible for evaluating effectiveness and recommending modification (or development) of advisement policy with regards to the AAC. The Director of the AAC is responsible for gathering this group (once each academic year) and providing updates on the progress of the AAC and its overall functions as an academic support unit. This method addresses objectives B-iv, B-v, and B-vi.

IV. Methods

Data Collection Timeline Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description of Method</th>
<th>Timeline (Frequency)</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Goal/Objective Addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct observations</td>
<td>EMH House Leader meetings with students: House Leaders meet individually with each EMH resident.</td>
<td>Throughout the fall and spring semesters; ongoing</td>
<td>EMH House Leaders</td>
<td>B-i, B-iv, B-vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Utilization Rates</td>
<td>AAC Satellite office sign-in sheets: Students who meet with advisors in the satellite office must sign-in before they meet with an advisor.</td>
<td>Throughout the fall and spring semesters; ongoing</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>B-vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EMH event attendance: EMH House Leaders record and track resident’s attendance at all EMH events.</td>
<td>Throughout the fall and spring semesters; ongoing</td>
<td>EMH House Leaders and Graduate Asst.</td>
<td>B-v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Evaluation forms</td>
<td>Advising Summit program evaluation: each participant completes a program evaluation at the conclusions of the Summit.</td>
<td>Fall semester; ongoing</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>B-vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring Majors Fair Faculty evaluations: Departmental advisors and participants complete a program survey at the conclusion of the EMF.</td>
<td>Fall semester; ongoing</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>B-vi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Majors Fair Student evaluations: each student completes a survey upon leaving the EMF.</td>
<td>Fall semester; ongoing</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>B-vi, B-v, B-vi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidSemester Check Faculty evaluation: Each faculty participant completes an evaluation at the conclusion of the program.</td>
<td>Fall and spring semesters in 2009, 2010, &amp; 2011</td>
<td>MSC committee compiles evaluations and references when planning future programs</td>
<td>B-vi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidSemester Check Student Evaluations: Students who attend the MSC complete a program evaluation at the end of the program.</td>
<td>Fall and spring semesters in 2009, 2010, &amp; 2011</td>
<td>MSC committee compiles evaluations and references when planning future programs</td>
<td>B-v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIV 101/201 Course evaluation: UNIV 101/201 course evaluations provided from the Orientation and First-Year experience office.</td>
<td>Spring semester; ongoing</td>
<td>Orientation and First Year Experience compiles evaluations and forwards results to AAC advisors who were the instructors for their class section</td>
<td>B-iii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention and Transfer rates</td>
<td>AAC student migration data: The AAC Director request migration data from the Director of Testing Services on the persistence of AAC students since 2008.</td>
<td>Each spring semester; ongoing</td>
<td>AAC Director &amp; Directors of Testing Services</td>
<td>B-i, B-ii, B-iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Majors House monitoring of academic performance: End of semester and end of year GPAs are evaluated</td>
<td>At the end of each semester; ongoing</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>B-i, B-ii, B-iii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Satisfaction Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>Direct Observations</th>
<th>Participation/Utilization Rates</th>
<th>Program Evaluation Forms</th>
<th>Retention &amp; Transfer Rates</th>
<th>Satisfaction Surveys</th>
<th>Student Surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1:</strong> Increase the retention rates for students who begin with the AAC and for 3rd/4th semester CHANCE students.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2:</strong> Increase the number of AAC students who declare a major no later than the end of the 4th semester of enrollment or junior standing (earned 60 credit hours).</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3:</strong> Reduce the number and percentage of AAC students who are placed on probation/dismissed annually.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 4: Increase student learning as identified in the “AAC Academic Advising Goals and Student Learning Objectives”.

Goal 5: Continue to increase student satisfaction with services provided by the AAC staff as evidenced by the AAC spring survey results and the Orientation evaluation feedback.

Goal 6: Increase the awareness of the importance of academic advising to student success among campus constituents.

V. Evidence & Use of Results

Objective/Goal 1: Increase the retention rates for students who begin with the AAC and for 3rd/4th semester CHANCE students.

A. AAC Advisor taught UNIV classes: Advisors will teach special sections of UNIV 101 to build a stronger advising relationship with first-semester students.

UNIV 101 sections have been taught by Academic Advising Center (AAC) advisors between fall 2007 and fall 2010 with three sections designated to target “Undecided – Any College” students. A total of 319 students have enrolled in UNIV 101 sections taught by AAC staff as identified through MyNIU rosters. The majority of students served were declared “Undecided-Any College” majors. Approximately 6 sections throughout the timeframe were open to any incoming first year student. In fall 2011 an UNIV 201 section was added. Furthermore, in fall 2009, the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning (OSEEL) identified the AAC to pilot the first Themed Learning Community (TLC). The TLC paired the following courses: UNIV 101, COMS 100 and ENGL 103 with the theme of Exploring Majors.

AAC UNIV Survey: In the fall 2011 semester, the AAC conducted the AAC UNIV Survey which targeted “Undecided-Any College” students enrolled in UNIV 101/201 sections taught by AAC advisors. 77 students completed the survey. 95% of respondents strongly agreed that taking UNIV with an Academic Advisor helped them be involved in the academic advising process. 95% also reported having gained knowledge of university academic requirements and major opportunities at NIU as well as making informed decisions when declaring a major; 64% reported having met with their academic advisor/UNIV instructor to discuss major exploration; 87% to talk about spring registration; 38% to address academic concerns; and 4% to address general questions, transfer information and personal problems.

Sample of student responses included:
- Advisors were knowledgeable and helpful
- “Formed a relationship with my advisor”
- “Learned about university rules, services, UG catalog, graduation requirements”

Findings:
Based on the survey responses, our goal for advisor taught sections of UNIV 101/201 has been met. Preliminary assessment of students’ cumulative fall GPA suggests AAC students benefit from having an advisor teach this course. Of the 319 students enrolled in UNIV 101 (comprising of 21 sections), the average fall semester cumulative GPA was 2.538. The most significant implications can be found through closer analysis by GPA ranges. For instance, almost 40% (39.50%) had a cumulative fall GPA at or above 3.0. Increasing the scope indicated, over half (51.41%) had a cumulative fall GPA at or above 2.75.
- **UNIV 101 TLC**: The average fall cumulative GPA for this section of UNIV was a 2.998. No student within this section ended their fall semester on academic probation, though 2 were on freshmen warning. Twelve students (66.67%) earned GPAs at or above 3.00 (almost 78% earned a GPA of 2.5 or higher). The cumulative GPA average for this section at the end of the spring 2010 was 2.714. 70% of the students enrolled in this TLC declared their major by the end of their 4th semester (N=14), leaving six students who did not return to NIU for various reasons.

- **UNIV 101 for African-American women**: Based on the data gathered from the First year connections UNIV course evaluations of the first UNIV 101 section targeting African-American women and comments made to the instructors by the students; it was identified that there was a need to continue to serve this population.

*Use of Results*

The GPA analysis of UNIV sections taught by AAC advisors demonstrated students’ academic achievement and persistence (40% of students had a GPA of 3.0 or higher and over half (51.4%) a GPA of 2.75 or higher).

- **UNIV 101 TLC**: Based on the success of students declaring a major within the first four semesters; with the greatest percentage within the first three semesters, AAC offered a TLC “Exploring Majors” in the fall 2011.

- **UNIV 101 for African-American women**: Incorporated feedback from students to improve the instruction and relevance to African American women first year students’ adjustment to college.

**Objective/Goal 2**: Increase the number of AAC students who declare a major no later than the end of the 4th semester of enrollment or junior standing (earned 60 credit hours).

A. Exploring Majors House: Provide academic and major exploration programming that will assist EMH residents in learning more about majors of interest.

*Findings & Use of Results*

**Exploring Major House Year-End Survey**: this survey revealed that the majority of students felt that the Exploring Majors House had been helpful in assisting them in exploring and choosing a major. Students found events that discussed majors and getting involved to be the most helpful. A majority indicated that they have visited a tutoring center.

The average GPA for an EMH resident at the end of the 2010-2011 school year ranged from 2.0-2.2. However, the average GPA for residents who attended two or more events ranged from 2.56 on the third floor to 2.04 on the fifth floor.

During the 2010/2011 school year, 44 students completed the survey in April 2011. Furthermore, all respondents indicated that they had participated in events held by the Exploring Majors House. 72% of students who responded indicated that the programs they attended were helpful in helping them choose a major.

**Sample of students responses of why current residents would recommend the Exploring Majors House to an incoming freshman.**

- “It’s a good experience. You can go to a lot of events that are helpful if you don’t know your major yet.”
- “You get to meet people who are in the same situation you are.”
- “I do recommend because it was very helpful and helped students get an idea on what majors they desire.”
- “If they are not sure of what they want it can give them guidance.”
- “I would because it helped me so I know it can help the other incoming freshmen.”
The average freshman GPA at NIU at the end of the fall 2010 semester was 2.41 and at the end of the spring 2011 semester was 2.5. The results for the EMH were below these averages. Therefore we have implemented a new strategy for the 2011-2012 school year that includes study tables for EMH residents. We have begun by targeting classes deemed challenging for freshman, which include PSYC 102, CHEM 110/111, any math class, and COMS 100. House Leaders are provided with the names of students in these classes and are then given the responsibility of organizing these students into study groups.

Based on the results indicated above, this program is still in-progress. During the 2012-2013 academic year, we will align goals for the Exploring Major House to the AAC Advising goals and outcomes. This will allow the AAC to better track these student and maximize students’ overall GPA.

**Objective/Goal 3:** Reduce the number and percentage of AAC students who are placed on probation/dismissed annually.

A. **Academic Success Workshops:** A survey is provided at the conclusion of each presentation. Unfortunately, this survey only provides information on what the students thought of the presentation itself. In order to know the impact upon student retention, the primary objective of the program, GPA tracking as well as analysis of probation and dismissal rates are planned starting spring 2012. These statistics will be included in upcoming yearly internal reviews of the program, as well as future assessments.

**Findings**
The 2011 survey results are produced from the surveys students complete at the end of each workshop. The following are some important findings for the survey. First, 95.6% of respondents indicated that they found the information presented in the workshop to be valuable, and 92.6% say they would recommend the workshop to others. Secondly, over 58% of students indicated time management (or finding time to more study) was one of the primary areas in which they needed help, thus the continued emphasis upon that aspect of the workshop.

**Use of Results**
Internal evaluation of the Academic Success Workshops happens at the end of each semester to determine ways to improve the delivery of materials to students more effectively. During this period student evaluations are heavily scrutinized to determine areas for improvement. Results are tabulated via SurveyMonkey and analyzed.

From the evaluations, it was determined that our office will need to be more proactive in contacting students for these workshops. In the fall 2011, we began a three step approach to contacting students via mailed letter, follow-up e-mail and phone calls to students. This proved to be very beneficial and improved the attendance rates of students to these workshops. Lastly, students who are required to attend these workshops will not have their advising hold removed until they have completed both a workshop as well as a registration appointment with an academic advisor.

**Objective/Goal 4:** Increase student learning as identified in the “AAC Academic Advising Goals and Student Learning Objectives”.

A. **AAC Goals and Student Learning Objectives:** In the fall 2010, the AAC developed the AAC Goals and Student Learning Objectives. These were created to determine specific goals and student learning outcomes for AAC freshman and transfer students. This was implemented in the spring 2011 semester and assessment materials (i.e. surveys, focus groups, etc.) will be developed during the spring 2012 semester. Therefore, there are no findings or use of results for this method at this time. Starting spring 2012, we will develop assessment methods to evaluate these goals and outcomes.
B. **Student Usage and Office Traffic:** each spring, the AAC evaluates the number of students who have used the services of the AAC during that year. Attachment A provides information on the number and frequency of appointments as well as other contact we have had over the past five years.

*Findings & Use of Results*

Over the past five years, we have met with 4,581 students a total of 13,483 times. Students average three advising meeting each year. Most students (41%) met with an advisor between two to four times a year. Most appointments (76%) were advising related but, almost 26% were for “other” reasons (i.e. academic probation appointments; personal concerns; UNIV conferences, etc.). In 2008-2009, we saw a significant increase (80%) in the number of walk-in advising appointments (N=383 in 2007-2008; N=689 in 2008/2009). As a result, we limited walk-in advising appointments to peak times during the semester (i.e. add/drop, withdrawal, etc.). This would require students to schedule an advising appointment to discuss more detailed issues. This allowed use to have more effective communication with students during advising meetings. Additional data is provided in Attachment A.

Additional assessment is needed to determine the impact of advising meetings to the new AAC Advising Goals and Student Learning Outcomes. Starting spring 2012, we will work to develop assessment strategies to connect student usage of the office to goal/objective B-iv.

**Objective/Goal 5:** Continue to increase student satisfaction with services provided by the AAC staff as evidenced by the AAC spring survey results and the Orientation evaluation feedback.

A. **2011 Summer Orientation Evaluations:** Orientation and First-Year Experience office provide results of students and family survey response to their satisfaction with their orientation experience to the Advising Dean of each academic college and the AAC Director.

*Findings & Use of Results*

Results from our summer 2011 orientation evaluations are sent from the Orientation and First-Year Experience office indicate that most students and families indicate their question have been answered and our staff was helpful. Although feedback has been good, we will develop an assessment tool from the newly developed AAC Goals and Student Learning Objectives that will better determine if students have achieved the outcomes presented. Therefore, this goal has been met based on these results.

B. **AAC Annual Satisfaction Survey:** Each spring the AAC surveys students who have use AAC services during the academic year. This survey is to determine how satisfied students are with the services the AAC provides. A link to the survey is available at [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KCW5GZG](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KCW5GZG).

*Findings*

Results from our 2010 AAC Annual Survey indicate that students are satisfied with the services that we provide and that our goal has been met. Student satisfaction was reported as follows: 95.4% of respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their time spent with an advisor; 92.3% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with advice given on class selection; 94% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with information provided about general education requirements; 81.6% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with major selection resources provided; and 93.9% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the friendliness of the AAC staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample student comments from 2010 Annual Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ “They were very patient and understanding, and had a flexible schedule.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ “I like the friendliness of every staff member in that department. They always were willing to help and gave great advice,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ “All of the advisors are really friendly and know what they are talking about,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ “I like the understanding staff, as well as interest taken to give the student the best advice,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ “They are always available and they are very helpful and open”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, the survey did highlight areas of improvement. The 2010 survey results indicated that the majority of respondents did not attend either the Exploring Majors Fair (73.3%) or MidSemester Check (75%). Students provided qualitative feedback as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample student comments on areas for improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “When looking at classes they focus on gen. eds. too much and it sometimes feels like they are forcing you to go along with what they decide.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “It can be hard to get a hold of people or make an appointment.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Sometimes the appointments are actually longer than expected and I usually have places to be. If one person goes over time, then it pushes everyone else’s appointments back.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of Results
Survey results are shared with AAC staff to evaluate the student’s experience. Changes that have been implemented include the addition of a second support staff in August 2011 as well as required attendance of the Exploring Majors Fair and MidSemester Check programs for UNIV 101/201 sections taught by AAC advisors. Additional information from the survey results is available in Attachment D.

Goal/Objective 6: Increase the awareness of the importance of academic advising to student success among campus constituents.

A. Exploring Majors Fair: at the conclusion of the Exploring Majors Fair students and advisors complete a program evaluation. Below are the numbers of students and departments who have attended the fair:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Student Attendance</th>
<th>Department Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings & Use of Results
Student Feedback: At each EMF a survey is provided to students as they exit the room. Because we have several staff members at each exit we are able to ensure the vast majority of students complete the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student evaluation samples on “How can the Exploring Majors Fair improved?”:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “Everything is great”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Map of which tables are where”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “It’s excellent”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Make sure everyone stays at their tables.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “More booths”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “It helped me a lot in my major but I don’t see how it can be improved.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other information collected demonstrate that the majority of students learn about the fair from UNIV 101 instructors; feel the fair was offered at an appropriate time of day; and found the department(s) they were looking for during the program.

Advisor/Participant Feedback: During each EMF a participant survey is provided to each advisor’s/participant’s table. Near the end of the event an AAC staff member reminds each participant to complete the survey. While a lower percentage of participants complete the survey than students, completion rates are still quite high.
Sample advisor/participant feedback when asked “Please describe some positive aspects of the EMF.”

- “Nice set-up, good organizational flow.”
- “Room was set up well”
- “Good advertising”
- “Students, the many tables represented”

A second question asks, “How can the EMF be improved next year?”

Sample advisor/participant feedback regarding improving the fair

- Common responses include the following:
  - “Music should be louder”
  - “Perhaps have a raffle for students”
  - “Some students seemed to only come for class credit – weren’t interested . . . I don’t know how this can change though! (Other students were very interested!)”

Other information collected from the surveys showed that a majority of the advisors/participants indicated that information about the fair was provided in a timely manner; they were faculty members; and that the fair was offered at an appropriate time of day.

B. AAC & Career Services Presentation to UNIV classes: A paper survey is provided to students at the conclusion of each presentation. Past surveys have been conducted jointly between Career Services and the Academic Advising Center. However, in the fall 2011, the Academic Advising Center conducted its own survey. Evidence presented for this assessment comes from the fall 2010 surveys which were jointly conducted with Career Services. Evidence from evaluations related to the AAC was primarily determined through questions 4-6 of the survey.

Findings

2010 Survey Results: Evidence is taken from three questions contributed to the survey by the AAC. A total of 710 students completed the survey. The following is a breakdown of the specific responses to the questions relevant to the AAC.

**Top 3 student responses to Question #4:** “List one thing you learned about the academic advising process.”

- 13.8% indicated that they need to plan early
- 11.27% indicated that it is helpful
- 9% indicated they learned about major exploration.

**Top 2 student responses to Question #5:** “List one action you will take to explore possible majors or confirm that the major you selected is the correct one for you.”

- 23% indicated job shadowing/internship
- 19% indicated they would talk to someone (i.e. advisor, counselor, mentor, teacher, etc.).
- 9% indicated they would making a major exploration advising appointment
- 9% indicated they would attend the Exploring Majors Fair.

**Top 3 student responses to Question #6:** When do you plan to see your academic advisor next?

- 34% indicated they would see an advisor within 2 weeks
- 24.9% indicated they would see their academic advisor in the current semester (after 2 weeks)
- 9% indicated they had already seen their advisor by the time they attend the presentation.
**Use of Results**

Yearly evaluation of the AAC portion of the presentation is undertaken each spring semester to determine ways to improve the delivery of materials to students more effectively. During this period student evaluations are heavily scrutinized to determine areas of deficiency. Although this goal has been met, the AAC portion of the presentation and survey will be revamped and implement in fall 2012. This will be to better highlight the importance of academic advising in student academic success.

**VI. Further information needed and timeline**

A. AAC advisor taught sections of UNIV 101/201

- **UNIV 101 for African-American women:** A log of comments or a survey matching the goals and objectives of this section will be implemented in fall 2012. In addition, we will develop 1-2 goals and student learning outcomes that can better measure the effectiveness of this UNIV section. Follow-up after the first semester by instructor would include monitoring students’ persistence.

- **UNIV 101TLC:** AAC will continue to collaborate with OSEEL and offer a TLC “Exploring Majors” each fall. Additional TLCs could include “Major & Career Exploration” and “Exploring STEM Majors” for incoming freshmen. We anticipate these new TLCs will be offered in the 2012-2013 academic year based on funding and student interest.

- **UNIV 101/201:** Since fall 2011 was the first time this survey was implemented, a baseline was created and further assessment is needed in the following fall semesters to determine the effectiveness of academic advisors teaching UNIV sections to undecided any college students. We plan to continue to this assessment in the fall 2012.

B. EMH Year-End survey

Since the EMH is only for undecided freshman we plan to follow up with students in their sophomore year to evaluate their success with major selection as well as academic progress. We will do so in the 2011-2012 academic year.

C. Academic Success workshops

While the surveys returned by students are invaluable in determining how well information is being processed by students, the best measurement would be through GPA tracking for attendees. Currently, the AAC is working on instituting a tracking system to better verify the direction attendee GPAs are trending. This will be implemented in the fall 2012 semester.

D. Exploring Majors Fair

One of the goals of the fair is to help students choose a major. Therefore we will follow-up with students who have attended the EMF in the following academic year to see if they have declared done so. This effort would be improved by switching from our current paper sign-in system to a swipe card system that captures student information electronically. We plan to implement the swipe card check-in by fall 2013.

Because the EMF is not only for students who are undecided we are exploring a possible name change for the event. Ideally, this will attract and be more inclusive of all students, including those who have already selected a major. We will solicit feedback from the AAC Faculty Oversight Committee, the Advising Deans and students in the 2012-2013 academic year.

E. AAC/Career Services UNIV class presentations

The ability of the AAC to determine student follow-through of students related to advising is limited to their survey responses. In order to truly determine whether students are absorbing and acting upon the information received during these presentations, the AAC will explore options on revamping our presentation and survey. We also will explore the option of using
student and UNIV 101/20 instructor focus groups as a method of assessment. We plan to implement these changes by fall 2013.

VII. Summary

The Academic Advising Center continues to work diligently to gather and use the above mentioned information to make important staffing decisions and to guide best advising practices. Although there has been a high amount of growth and turnover in leadership, the Center continues to fulfill its core mission. We have made great strides to develop positive relationships campus-wide. Furthermore, we created programs that have now become staples of NIU (i.e. Exploring Majors Fair, etc.). I believe this solidifies the need for the Academic Advising Center at NIU.

Based on much of the data and observations we have made over the past five years, the AAC has implemented specific items that will benefit our students and our office. First, a Student Success Specialist was added to our staff in the November of 2011 semester. One of her primary responsibilities is to focus on the retention of AAC students. Her role is directly related to the AAC’s mission as well as our goals/objectives. In the spring 2012, she will coordinate the Academic Success workshops and focus goal/objective B-iii.

Second, in the spring 2011 semester we implements required advising for all AAC students as well as the Academic Success workshops. These two items were in direct response to goals/objectives. Lastly, the AAC Advising Goals and Student Learning Outcomes were created in fall 2011 to better document the impact the AAC has in academic advising, retention, and student success at NIU.

VIII. Available Data (correct/list appendix documents)
The Academic Advising Center is in its seventh academic year as a functioning academic support unit. The AAC has gathered feedback and information from a variety of sources in reference to our assessment objectives.

Appendices
A. Orientation Evaluation Summary
B. 2010 Advising Summit program evaluation
C. Academic Success workshop survey
D. AAC & Career Services presentation to UNIV classes survey
E. UNIV 101/201 Survey Summary
F. Exploring Major Fair Faculty Advisor Survey
G. Exploring Majors Fair Student Questionnaire
H. AAC Organizational chart as of November 2011
I. Fall 2011 AAC Staff Activities chart

Attachments
A. Student Usage and Office Traffic Summary
B. AAC Advising Goals and Student Learning Outcomes for freshmen
C. AAC Advising Goals and Student Learning Outcomes for transfers
D. Spring 2011 Faculty Oversight Committee report
Appendix A

AAC Summer 2011 Orientation Evaluations
From Abbey E. Wolfman
Associate Director of Orientation & First-Year Experience
Orientation & First-Year Experience Office

Week One (June 8-9) orientation evaluation results for student and family members.

Student Questions

22. The college representative thoroughly explained the degree requirements for my major/program.
23. My advisor was helpful and service oriented.
24. My advisor thoroughly answered my questions and concerns.
25. I spent a sufficient amount of time with my advisor.
26. I am comfortable consulting my advisor in the future.

All Colleges
Total students: 245

22. 4.40
23. 4.50
24. 4.49
25. 4.38
26. 4.49

Academic Advising Center
Total students: 18

22. 4.28
23. 4.61
24. 4.67
25. 4.39
26. 4.50

Family Member Questions

6. The college dean or advising center representative provided useful information about the services available to my student.
7. I gained a better understanding of the academic expectations of my student's major/college unit.

All Colleges
Total: 238

6. 4.62
7. 4.45

Academic Advising Center
Total: 20

6. 4.40
7. 4.35
Week Three (June 20-23) orientation evaluation results for student and family members.

**Student Questions**

22. The college representative thoroughly explained the degree requirements for my major/program.
23. My advisor was helpful and service oriented.
24. My advisor thoroughly answered my questions and concerns.
25. I spent a sufficient amount of time with my advisor.
26. I am comfortable consulting my advisor in the future.

All Colleges
Total students: 544
22. 4.35
23. 4.43
24. 4.44
25. 4.26
26. 4.42

Academic Advising Center
Total students: 50

22. 4.16
23. 4.51
24. 4.42
25. 4.28
26. 4.42

**Family Member Questions**

6. The college dean or advising center representative provided useful information about the services available to my student.
7. I gained a better understanding of the academic expectations of my student's major/college unit.

All Colleges
Total: 455
6. 4.63
7. 4.48

Academic Advising Center
Total: 47
6. 4.62
7. 4.47
Appendix B

2010 Academic Advising Summit
Program Evaluation

1. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), was the Academic Advising Summit a valuable experience?
   1 2 3 4 5

2. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), did the Academic Advising Summit provide useful information?
   1 2 3 4 5

3. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), did the Academic Advising Summit contribute to your work as an advisor?
   1 2 3 4 5

4. What did you like most about Academic Advising Summit?

5. What did you like least about Academic Advising Summit?

6. What would you like to see more of in upcoming Advising Summits?

7. Other comments/suggestions for future programs?

8. Please circle the position that best defines you:

   Faculty Advisor            Professional Academic Advisor            Academic Support Professional

   Other (Write-in): _____________________________

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Appendix C

**Academic Success Workshop Evaluation**

1.) Did you feel that you have a grasp on how to calculate your GPA?
   - Yes
   - No

2.) Tell us one thing you didn’t know before that was presented to you today.
   

3.) What is one thing that you will incorporate into your study habits as a result of today’s presentation?
   

4.) Do you feel that you have gained valuable information as a result of today’s presentation?
   - Yes
   - No

5.) Do you feel as if the time you went to a workshop worked well with your schedule?
   - Yes
   - No

6.) What was one thing you wish you would have heard about today’s presentation?
   

7.) Would you recommend the Academic Success Workshop to your friends? Why or why not?
   

Additional Comments:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix D

UNIV 101/201 Academic Advising/Career Services Presentation
60 Second Survey

1. Was today’s presentation helpful/useful? Why or why not?

2. List one question that you would ask your Academic Advisor from this presentation.

3. List one question that you would ask your Career Counselor from this presentation.

4. When is the next time you should meet with your Academic Advisor?

5. What is your declared major?
Appendix E

Academic Advising Center
UNIV 101/201 Survey
Fall 2011

Please answer the following questions.

1. Taking UNIV 101/201 with my Academic Advisor helped me be involved in the academic advising process
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

2. I am knowledgeable on university academic requirements and major opportunities at NIU
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

3. I gained knowledge to make informed decisions to declare a major
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

4. This semester, I met with my UNIV instructor /academic advisor to the following (circle all that apply)
   a. Major/Career exploration
   b. Spring 2012 registration
   c. Academic concerns (GPA, schedule changes, etc.)
   d. Other: ________________________________

5. List at least 2 advantages from having taken UNIV 101/201 with an Academic Advisor
   a. __________________________________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________________________________

6. What can academic advisors do to improve this course in the future?
Appendix F

2010 Faculty/Staff Exploring Majors Fair Questionnaire

1. Was information about the Exploring Majors Fair communicated to you in a timely manner?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. Are you…
   a. Faculty
   b. SPS
   c. Grad Assistant
   d. Undergraduate
   e. Other __________________________

3. Was the Exploring Majors Fair offered at an appropriate time of day?
   a. Yes
   b. No, which time would be appropriate: ________________________

4. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), how would you rate the Exploring Majors Fair?
   1  2  3  4  5

5. Please describe some positive aspects of the fair.

6. How can the fair be improved next year?
Appendix G

Exploring Majors Fair Student Questionnaire

1. How did you find out about the Exploring Majors Fair?

2. Was the Exploring Majors Fair offered at an appropriate time of day?
   o Yes
   o No, which time would be better for you? _________________

3. Were there any departments not available that you wanted to speak with?
   o Yes, please specify which departments; _______________________
   o No

4. On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), how would you rate the Exploring Majors Fair?

   1  2  3  4  5

5. How can the Exploring Majors Fair be improved?
Appendix I

Academic Advising Center Organizational Chart
November 2011

Michelle Pickett
Director

Steven Barleen
Associate Director

Sharon Freeman
OSS (Primary)

Sara Matthies-Long
OSS (Secondary)

Jon Ferguson
Mazen Nagi
Advisors

Susana Das Neves
Colette Maher
Beverly McCall
Advisor/Counselors

Amy Horn
Student Support Specialist
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Liaison:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Advising Alerts&lt;br&gt;Advising Summit&lt;br&gt;Advisory committee&lt;br&gt;Assessment&lt;br&gt;Academic Warning, Probation, and Dismissal&lt;br&gt;Budget&lt;br&gt;Financial Aid/SAP appeals&lt;br&gt;Pre-orientation student meetings&lt;br&gt;Supervise Advisors, Advisor/Counselors, Student Support Specialist &amp; Secretaries&lt;br&gt;Third Attempt Requests</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Admissions related programs (Open House, Admitted Student Days, Receptions)&lt;br&gt;Exploring Majors Fair (fall only)&lt;br&gt;Exploring Majors House (GA: Aja)&lt;br&gt;Exploring Majors House e-mail resource&lt;br&gt;New Student Reception (fall only)&lt;br&gt;Orienteation&lt;br&gt;Summer campus update meetings (for Orientation)&lt;br&gt;Satellite office&lt;br&gt;Supervise EMH House Leaders and Graduate Assistants</td>
<td>Admissions, Housing, College of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bev</td>
<td>Academic Excellence, Honorable Mention and Great Start Award&lt;br&gt;OSAS projects (Post FR programs: Eligible to Enroll, Transcript monitoring)</td>
<td>CHANCE, College of Health &amp; Human Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colette</td>
<td>Database/Data&lt;br&gt;Technology (Online newsletter, Website, Blackboard, Database)&lt;br&gt;Training/Staff Development</td>
<td>CHANCE, CAAR, College of Visual &amp; Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon</td>
<td>AAC e-mail resource&lt;br&gt;Mid-Semester Check&lt;br&gt;Pre-orientation meetings</td>
<td>Honors, College of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazen</td>
<td>AAC/Career Services presentation (fall only)&lt;br&gt;Workshops (GA: Brittany)</td>
<td>Career Services, College of Liberal Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susana</td>
<td>Freshman &amp; Transfer advising plans&lt;br&gt;OSAS projects (FR programs: Early Alert, MAP Works &amp; Predictive Model)</td>
<td>CHANCE, College of Engineering &amp; Engineering Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate Assistants/Intern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aja (GA)</td>
<td>Exploring Majors House(Advisor: Steve)&lt;br&gt;UNIV presentations (Advisor: Mazen)&lt;br&gt;Workshops (Academic Success &amp; Major Exploration); Advisor: Mazen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany (GA)</td>
<td>Workshops (Academic Success and Major Exploration); Advisor: Mazen&lt;br&gt;UNIV presentations (Advisor: Mazen)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannice (Intern)</td>
<td>Advising Summit (w/ Michelle)&lt;br&gt;UNIV presentations (Advisor: Mazen)&lt;br&gt;Workshops (Academic Success &amp; Major Exploration); Advisor: Mazen&lt;br&gt;Working with Michelle &amp; Colette</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>