

Division of Academic Affairs

Academic Advising Center

February 28, 2017

Michelle Pickett, Director

1. **History and Context**

The Academic Advising Center (AAC) was established January 2005 under the guidance of the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Academic Affairs 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 2005. The Center was initially established with a coordinator and two academic advisors. In 2007, three academic advisor/counselors positions were added to the Center with the goal of increasing retention rates for third and fourth semester CHANCE Program students. Today, the Center is staffed with six full-time employees, one graduate assistant and one Academic and Career Exploratory Scholars (ACES) House Leader. We currently serve over 300 declared AAC students and approximately 300 students in transition.

Along with the growth of the AAC, there have been many changes in the physical location and leadership of the department. Since its inception, the Center has had four directors and three office locations. Its first director, 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 the current director has been in place since May 2011.

Since 2012 there have been additional changes in staff which impacted some AAC programming. These changes include turnover in the Associate Director position. Turnover in this position impacted the Academic and Exploratory Scholars (ACES) House; which is the AAC's living-learning community in the residence halls. As a result, improvements were made for the ACES House. First, the name of the program was changed from the Exploring Majors Fair to the Academic and Career Exploratory Scholars. (ACES) House. Next, the House was relocated from Neptune Hall to Stevenson Hall, C-tower.

Additional changes were made to AAC signature programs and new services were added. After reviewing feedback from an ad-hoc committee of advisors and Career Services counselors, the name of the Exploring Majors Fair program was changed to the Academic Career Expo. Likewise, in our goal to increase awareness of advising campus-wide, we added the Advisor Appreciation Reception to support advising and academic advisors at NIU. Lastly, there are two programs the AAC no longer coordinates; the MidSemster Check Program and presentations to the UNIV 101/201 classes with Career Services. The MidSemester Check program has moved to the Office of Student Academic Success. Furthermore, due to the change in focus with the UNIV 101/201 course, the need for the Academic Advising and Career Services presentation was eliminated. While these changes occurred, current AAC staff were reassigned specific duties to ensure quality advising services were provided to students.

2. Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission Statement

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.

Unit Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Offer highly individualized advising to students that promote persistence and graduation through careful academic planning, timely declaration of major and understanding of academic requirements.

- Objective 1.1: Provide high-touch, developmental advising services to students not affiliated with a major college or department.
- Objective 1.2: 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.
- Objective 1.3: Serve as a critical landing spot for students in transition from one college to another.

Goal 2: Increase the retention rates for students who begin with the AAC and for third and fourth semester CHANCE students.

- Objective 2.1: Increase student learning as identified in the “AAC Academic Advising Goals and Student Learning Objectives”.
- Objective 2.2: 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).
- Objective 2.3: Reduce the number and percentage of AAC students who are placed on probation/dismissed annually.

Goal 3: Increase the awareness of the importance of academic advising to student success among campus constituents.

- Objective 3.1: Provide advising programming and resources that help students to understand the advising services of the University.
- Objective 3.2: Assist in improving of training, professional development and recognition programming that supports NIU academic advisors and academic support staff.

3. Assessment Methods

Explanation of Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation			
	Description	Assessment-Level Target	When Data Will Be Collected	Person Responsible
AAC Annual Student Satisfaction Survey	This survey is sent to any students who has utilized AAC services over the past academic year to determine their satisfaction with AAC services and advisors.	At least 85% of students will indicate they are satisfied or extremely satisfied with the quality of AAC services.	Each spring semester; ongoing	Associate Director
AAC Student Advisory Council	Director meets with the Student Advisory Council members for feedback and ideas on AAC programs and services.	Feedback from the Council will show that the AAC is providing valuable advising services to students.	Each spring	Director
AAC Student Migration Data	Data is requested from the Director of Testing Services that shows the progress of AAC students major declaration and graduation by cohort.	At least 75% of students have declared their major by the end of their fourth semester.	Each spring semester; ongoing	Director
Academic Career Expo Faculty/Staff evaluations	This survey will provide an assessment of how academic advisors and faculty participants feel the program was beneficial for their department.	At least 80% of participants will indicate that participating in the program was beneficial.	Fall semester; ongoing	Associate Director
Academic Career Expo Student evaluations	This survey will provide assessment of this program address students major and career exploration needs.	At least 80% of participants will indicate that attending this program was beneficial.	Fall semester; ongoing	Associate Director
Academic Progress Letters	Advisors review their academic progress and GPA. Letters are mailed to each student to determine what, if any, schedule changes are needed to ensure the students' academic success.	At least 75% of students will not have to adjust their class schedule to repeat courses they did not pass.	End of fall and spring; on-going	Each advisor
Academic Success Meeting Evaluation	Each student who attends an Academic Success meeting completes a survey at the conclusion of the meeting.	At least 75% of students will understand what is needed for them to return to good academic standing.	End of each semester	AAC Advisor (Mazen Nagi)

Assessment Method	Explanation			
	Description	Assessment-Level Target	When Data Will Be Collected	Person Responsible
ACES House Academic Performance Monitoring	Data is collected to review ACES House residents' academic performance and grade point averages to determine their academic progress.	At least 50% of residents will have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above after their first year.	At the end of each semester; ongoing	Associate Director
ACES House Leader and resident meetings	ACES House Leaders meet individually with each resident to understand how each resident is adjusting to campus and learn if they have any questions related to major and career exploration.	Feedback from these meetings will assist ACES House leadership in providing valuable services to residents.	Throughout the fall and spring semesters; ongoing	ACES House Leader(s) and Graduate Assistant
ACES House Program Evaluation	This survey provides an assessment of how residents/students perceived the effectiveness of the ACES House program. It also tracks residents' attendance at ACES House events.	At least 75% of participants will indicate that attending the program was beneficial.	Throughout the fall and spring semesters; ongoing	ACES House Leader(s) and Graduate Assistant
ACES House resident evaluations	This survey is distributed to ACES House residents by the ACES House Leaders. It is used to evaluate the quality of the programming offered in ACES House living-learning community.	At least 75% of participants will indicate that being a ACES House resident was beneficial to their transition to campus and academic success.	April of each year; ongoing	ACES House Leader(s) and Graduate Assistant
Advising Summit Program Evaluation	This survey will provide assessment of how participants perceived the effectiveness of the program in addressing their professional development needs.	At least 80% of participants will indicate that attending this program contributed toward their professional development.	Fall semester; ongoing	Director
Student Usage and Office Traffic	An electronic database was used to track the number of students who utilize the AAC as well as outreach to students.	At least 80% of AAC declared majors have met with an AAC advisor for both a major exploration and registration meeting each semester.	Spring semester; ongoing	AAC Advisor/Counselor (Colette Maher)
Orientation Evaluation Summary	Results from this survey is provided to the AAC Director from the Orientation and Family Connections office each fall. It is a summary of the new student orientation summer program and details new freshmen and transfer students' satisfaction with the advising experience during orientation.	At least 75% of AAC declared majors will be satisfied or extremely satisfied with their advising experience during summer orientation.	Fall semester	AAC Director and Associate Director

Assessment Method	Explanation			
	Description	Assessment-Level Target	When Data Will Be Collected	Person Responsible
UNIV 101/201 Course evaluation	UNIV 101/201 course evaluations are provided to AAC staff who taught a section of the course. The course evaluations are provided to the UNIV 101 educator by the First- and Second-Year Experience Office.		Spring semester; ongoing	Individual advisors and the First- and Second-Year Experience Office.

Assessment Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

Assessment Method	Goal		
	Goal 1: Offer highly individualized advising to students that promote persistence and graduation through careful academic planning, timely declaration of major and understanding of academic requirements.	Goal 2: Increase the retention rates for students who begin with the AAC and for third and fourth semester CHANCE students.	Goal 3: Increase the awareness of the importance of academic advising to student success among campus constituents.
AAC Annual Student Satisfaction Survey	S, D	F, I	
AAC Student Advisory Council	F, D		
AAC Student Migration Data	S, I	F, I	
Academic Career Expo Faculty/Staff evaluations			S, I
Academic Career Expo Student evaluations			S, I
Academic Progress Letters	F, D	F, D	
ACES House Academic Performance Monitoring	F, D	F, D	
ACES House Leader meetings		F, D	
ACES House Program Evaluation			S, I
ACES House resident evaluations		F/S, I	
Advising Summit Program Evaluation			S, I

Assessment Method	Goal		
	Goal 1: Offer highly individualized advising to students that promote persistence and graduation through careful academic planning, timely declaration of major and understanding of academic requirements.	Goal 2: Increase the retention rates for students who begin with the AAC and for third and fourth semester CHANCE students.	Goal 3: Increase the awareness of the importance of academic advising to student success among campus constituents.
Student Usage and Office Traffic		S, I	
UNIV 101/201 Course evaluation	S, I		S, I