

April 26, 2024

SUBJECT: Academic Transformation Update: Ad Hoc Committee on Professional Advising Response and Recommendation

Dear President Kreider and Dean Douthitt,

As part of the ongoing Academic Transformation initiative, the Provost's Office has completed its review process for the ad hoc committee on professional advising's report.

Key Findings

The report argued persuasively that adopting centralized professional advising at Potomac State College would reduce faculty workload and improve student success. It also argued that professional advising would also improve and increase student access to academic advising, ease of appointment scheduling, and the campus' ability to leverage existing student success technologies for better communication with students and more impactful student tracking.

The proposal suggested a reasonable cost to implement, some of which is already being paid for or expected to be paid for as part of the college's Title III grant, some of which could be phased over time, and some of which is expected to be funded through the changes improving student success at the college.

There were some comments, questions, and concerns that the review team wished to pass on to the committee.

- Implementation of professional advising at the college will require a phased approach during which the college will need to determine which faculty continue to advise for the foreseeable future (see bullet below) and which faculty may retain advising temporarily during the transition. The budget for the retention of the current Title III grant advisers will also need to be determined.
- The college will need to determine which faculty should retain advising as part of their contractual expectations and what impact that will have on expected advising load and need for the professional advisers.
- The college should determine if advising for approved faculty should be moved from Teaching assignment to Service assignment.
- Because of other duties related to the Title III grant, current professional advisers are only at half the NACADA recommendation for students per professional adviser (derived from an average across participating institutions). As the institution moves off the Title III grant and into the implementation of professional advising, it will need to determine what the standard advising load should be and whether any additional advising personnel are necessary.

- The college should work with the Morgantown campus to improve its ability and processes to evaluate and develop its academic advisers, and thus improve the services they offer.
- The college will work to balance opportunities for faculty disciplinary and occupational expertise and mentorship with professional academic advising on transactional advising issues.
- The college will need to address faculty and professional adviser involvement in New Student Orientation activities to ensure adequate coverage and delivery a quality experience to students.
- The review team appreciates the argument made in the report that professional advising improves student success, especially retention, as supported by academic literature. The team understands that it is difficult if not impossible to precisely determine what impact professional advising has student success and retention and thus the financial impact.

Recommendation

After considering the report produced by the ad hoc committee and consulting with the campus' institutional leaders, the Provost's Office is recommending that Potomac State College should move forward with determining what is necessary to implement professional advising at the campus.

Sincerely,

Maryanne Reed
Provost