

Advising Notes: by Advisors, for Advisors

Fall 2016

You are a Leader! Research in Advising and Leadership

By Ebony Green, College of Education

As a twelve-year advising veteran at Wayne State University I have grown from my experiences with WSU students and pride myself on continually learning new and engaging strategies as an advisor. It was these experiences, along with my desire to impact the practice of advising, that served as a catalyst for beginning the doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies five years ago. My first instinct was to focus my studies on the topic of student retention. I soon realized, however, that it was *not* student retention I wanted to study. After sitting on multiple University committees and watching the WSU advising community grow into a committed body of practitioners, it hit me! Write about the people not the process.

Advising has been a long standing tradition at institutions of higher learning. Having transitioned from being a primarily faculty-led function to that of a highly trained professional, Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors (PUAAs) serve as the thread of communication between students and the administration. Research on advisors is sporadic at best. As such, literature about the historical perspective of advising, advisors as practitioners, and leadership development formed the foundation of my research exploring the perceived leadership perspectives advisors had about their leadership skills (Light, 2001; Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, Fleishman, 2000; National Academic Advising Association, 2015). This was done by using Katz's (1955) business based Three-Skill approach along with Northouse's (2010) Three-Skill Leadership Inventory which categorizes and scores skills into human, technical, and conceptual skill sets. The goal of my study was to provide insight about the skills PUAAs had when they entered the field of advising and the skills accumulated over time. The study was formulated by the following research questions:

What leadership skills do Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors perceive they have?

Through what means did they attain the perceived skill set(s) and how do they use those skills in their leadership roles as advisors?

A mixed method design that consisted of an inventory developed by Northouse (2010) paired with interviews given to sample participants was used for this study. The survey was distributed to 93 Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors as a self-assessment of their perceived level of skill (high, moderate, and low) across three skill areas: human, technical, and conceptual. Sixty-eight percent of the individuals completed the inventory and the mean scores of the N=64 advisors who completed the inventory reflected my hypothesis that PUAAs perceived high leadership skills in their roles.

The second phase of the study utilized a random convenience sample of 10 participants who were chosen to be interviewed. "The Ten" as they affectionately became known were made up of eight females and two males with years of service ranging from 2 ½ to 29 years.

The interview questions were designed in alignment with the inventory questions to provide a rich description of how advisors perceive their leadership skills. "The human, technical, and

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You are a Leader! (continued from pg. 1)

conceptual skill sets were used as broad themes to discuss other skills that advisors found important and used in their day-to-day advising styles.” (Green, 2016).

Overall, the study revealed that advisors unanimously perceive communication as the most important skill they use when engaging with students. In addition, advisors felt their physical presence to be the most important technical tool they use, in spite of the frequent use of various institutional databases and social media. Lastly, the big-picture thinking that led to advisors’ highest valued conceptual skill was reflected in their personal belief in respect and empathy.

This study provided a look at the skills that are important to a critical portion of the university makeup – Academic Advisors. Although limited in scope to just this institution, I believe this work provides an important start in showcasing the talents and aspirations of a community that is truly changing the world - one student at a time.

References

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Advisor Training Academy Update

By Kate Bernas, ATA

I am proud to report that this spring the ATA launched its first round of the **Advisor Training Curriculum**. All six modules were presented over three days in April with 45 WSU advisors (plus a few other student service professionals and even one faculty member!) participating in one or more modules. In total, **26** advisors completed all prerequisite and curriculum requirements to reach **Level 1 Advisor Certification**. These advisors received a letter of congratulations, copied to their supervisor, from Associate Provost Monica Brockmeyer, and a more formal recognition ceremony is being planned for later this fall. The next round of modules are already scheduled and open for registration on the advisortraining.wayne.edu website.

The ATA is also moving forward with a WSU Advisor Directory to be housed on the ATA website. This is a joint project with the AAC Communications Committee and will feature not only standard directory elements, but will list, and be searchable on, areas of expertise, committee membership, and professional organizations. So, if you are looking for a unique list of WSU advisors with special skills or knowledge, this may be just what you’ve been waiting for!

This fall we will continue to hold monthly Lunch and Learns, will discuss an Advisor Book Club selection in December, and will host two NACADA webinars. More information and RSVP links can be found at advisortraining.wayne.edu. Here are the September ATA dates to know:

NACADA Webinar on Thursday, September 15 - "Raising Compassion Satisfaction in Academic Advising: Practical Strategies for Dealing with Complaints", 2-3pm, Bernath Auditorium. RSVP link on the ATA website.

Lunch and Learn on Friday, September 23 – An overview by Adan Bauer of the ASC’s Financial Literacy Program. Noon, UGL Community Room (no RSVP required) .

Advisor Spotlight: *Laura Hetzler*

By Rachel Pawlowski, Honors College



Laura began her career at Wayne State University back in 2006 as a part-time advisor in the University Advising Center doing general advising. In 2014, she became a full-time academic advisor and now specializes in students with a pre-medicine or health science focus. When asked what theoretical perspectives she draws on in her practice, she stated that she tends to lean towards the proactive and developmental advising approaches. Currently, Laura is serving as the president of the Academic Advising Council (AAC) and hopes that during her tenure she can work on ways to prevent advisors across campus from working in silos and to help spread best practices and other information more freely. She also hopes that she can be a resource to upper levels of administration for what advisors need as far

as training, support, and general advising needs. Laura's list of professional memberships include MIACADA, NACADA, NAAHP, and MIAHP.

Laura received her bachelor's degree from University of Virginia in history and after graduation did event planning for Joe Louis Arena and Olympia Entertainment. From 2001-2006 she ran the box office for the Grosse Pointe Theater, as she herself was an actress in high school. She is currently enrolled in the Educational Psychology master's program at WSU and will be graduating in the summer of 2017. Laura currently lives in Grosse Pointe Woods with her husband, John, and their 3 kids, Rob (14), Alex (12) and Matthew (9). In her spare time she enjoys yoga, cooking, knitting, and acting. Laura can always be found with a smile on her face and a quick joke. Her students (and fellow advisors!) find her a valuable resource on campus and an important asset to WSU. The AAC is certainly looking forward to all she will accomplish during the year.

Student Service Insider

THE WRT ZONE

By Royanne Smith, CLAS

In 2013, the Writing Center and Student Technology Studio combined their resources to create a 'one-stop shop' repackaged as the **WRT Zone**.

Located on the second floor of the Undergraduate Library, the WRT Zone consists of three student-service areas: Writing, Technology, and Research. There are 11 tutors on staff currently. Most of these are degreed professionals who, along with several upper-level undergraduate peer tutors, serve approximately 8000 WSU students per year. Last month I spoke with Director Jule Thomas, who told me that the majority of the students her tutors see are graduate and ESL students. This was a revelation since I assumed that most students would be from first-year writing classes. In fact, tutors at the WRT Zone can help students at all levels with any assignment that requires research or writing, regardless of the subject area. They will also help students draft and revise scholarship letters, applications to graduate school, master's essays, and dissertations. Students with media projects can get technical instruction at the WRT Zone, too, employing Adobe Creative Suites, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, and other graphic and media software.

In addition to individual onsite tutoring, students can take advantage of writing and research assistance online. Signing up is easy through the WRT Zone website which provides an orientation tutorial video. Online Sunday hours are available as well. According to Jule, students who have met first with tutors face-to-face are the best candidates for successful online tutoring.

Jule and I agreed that the word needs to get around about the comprehensive services the WRT Zone has to offer, and that Wayne State advisors are at the frontline for that promotion. Suggestions include requiring a WRT Zone tutoring contact as part of a student's academic recovery plan or probation contract, encouraging faculty to sign up for WRT Zone classroom presentations, or request WRT Zone presentations for our own advising groups.

For more information about the WRT Zone or to suggest a workshop or request a presentation, go to clas.wayne.edu/writing/.

Top 10 Reasons to Attend the 2016 Academic Advising Summit

By Tracy Fahl Castle, Engineering

1. Listen to WSU's Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. Marquita Chamblee, deliver the Monday, September 19 keynote address on the role of diversity on our campus
2. Participate in three different break-out sessions with presentations on a variety of topics for advising diverse student populations
3. Socialize with your colleagues off campus at Granite City Food and Brewery for lunch
4. See the sights of Detroit on a bus tour that includes the Riverwalk, Corktown, Rivertown, and the New Center area
5. Attend a second keynote address on Tuesday, September 20 by the Deputy Director of ACLU of Michigan, Rana Elmir, who lectures on free speech and the intersection of race, faith, and gender
6. Gain new strategies for advising the diverse student populations at WSU
7. Be involved in the Academic Advising Council (AAC) Annual Business Meeting and learn about plans for 2016-2017
8. Enjoy a relaxing lunch at the Detroit Institute of Arts followed by engaging gallery tours
9. Participate in professional networking with campus colleagues
10. Strengthen your advising skills by sharing and developing approaches to best assist our diverse WSU students!

Quick Tips

By Stephanie Chastain,
Computer Science

Instead of skimming a webpage for specific information, use "Ctrl + F" to search a key word and be automatically directed to that area.

Introductions

By Avanti Herczeg, CFPCA

Desmond Mack has been working full-time for Wayne State University (WSU) since November 2015. But don't consider him a "newbie" by any means. Desmond began working for the University four years prior to that, as a student assistant, working at the front desk of the University Advising Center (UAC). He says it was during that time, working alongside the advising staff and students, and experiencing the "true work that goes into student success and the critical role that advisors play in a student's academic career" that he realized "it was time to get in the game!"

Desmond earned his psychology degree from WSU in May 2015 with a goal of becoming a therapist/counselor. Later that year he began his position as an Academic Service Officer I in the UAC where he currently advises pre-professional students, manages the student assistant staff, works on the department's web-design, and assists with the coordination of New Student Orientation. Desmond says he wants to use his position as both a recent graduate and a professional advisor to develop relationships with students and create an atmosphere that will aid in and encourage student success. This past winter semester, he enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health graduate program at WSU in hopes of giving back to his community.

Outside of work, Desmond is an avid reader. During our interview, I discovered that he is a fan of the Harry Potter series and plans to read the newest book after finishing Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. He also says that he is becoming a "foodie" and enjoys discovering new eateries around the city. He highly recommends the vegetarian restaurant, Seva (no, he is not a vegetarian...see next recommendation), and the Mercury Burger Bar. You might also catch him at Pie-Sci on Trumbull, which he has yet to try but is looking forward to, as pizza is his favorite food! The next time you are at the UAC, stop by Desmond's office and see what he recommends.



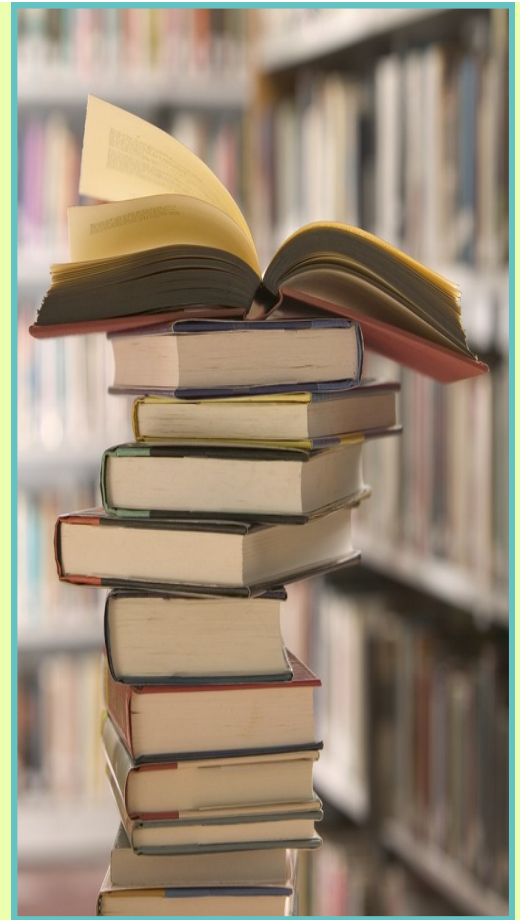
Academic Advising Council Update

By Laura Hetzler, AAC President

It's time for the changing of the guard in the AAC. I would like to welcome Stephanie Chastain as President-Elect, Avanti Herczeg as Secretary and Cassie Tackett as Professional School Member-at-Large. Thank you to Helen Wilson for her service as Member-at-Large, and especially to Royanne Smith, who finished out her term as Past-President. Royanne helped to launch the AAC and served an extra term as president when a staffing change left the position empty. She has been instrumental in creating the structure and vision of the AAC, and I know we can continue to count on her to lend her passion and commitment to her fellow advisors.

Our current focus in the AAC is a collaborative project with the Academic Training Academy to create a campus wide advisor directory. We have also established a goal of increasing awareness throughout all departments and colleges as to the professional training, development and promotion standards of all advisors so that our advising community is treated fairly at annual evaluations. We continue to strive to develop collegiality throughout our colleges and departments and to engender a strong spirit of community between all campus advisors.

Fall always brings new events. This fall the American College Personnel Association comes to WSU October 16-17 and are accepting presentation proposals until September 16. Learn more at mi.myaspa.org or by talking to Anita Carter in the UAC. And of course, I look forward to seeing you all at the Summit in September! Wishing you all the best at the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year.



Quick Tips

By Stephanie Chastain, Engineering

Create email templates for commonly asked questions such as override requests and placement exam questions.

Good News



The Pre-Med and Health Science Center's new pre-med advisor, Amanda Horwitz, welcomed second daughter Elliott (Elli) Jayne, on May 11, 2016. Elli was born at 6 lbs, 9 oz and 21 inches long. Amanda is

now back from maternity leave and reports that big sister Addelyn has been a tremendous help with the new addition!

We still want to hear your "Good News!" Please send along any personal or professional highlights from the past term; accomplishments, milestones, and other life events. Submit information to Kate Bernas at ab9599@wayne.edu.