

ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

COVID-19 VERSION: 2.0

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I. Overview: A Year of Learning and Adaptations

Academic Year 2020-21: the year that will be forever known as “the year of the asterisk”. Year to year comparisons using traditional metrics became questionable, and we were constantly adapting to new conditions. The global pandemic, in combination with the social justice and political climate, reinforced the critical importance of examining the *how* and *why* of everything we do. Higher Education is not known for a great willingness to change rapidly, but this year, inflexibility was not an option. The Academic Advising Center responded to each emerging challenge with creativity, sensitivity, and a focus on the health and wellbeing of our students, staff, community, and institution. Our responses were guided by our values, and we will be permanently changed.

The challenges experienced by many of our staff members were similar to what we heard from students- we are yearning for a sense of normalcy, knowing that the “new normal” can’t and shouldn’t look like the old version. For many of us, the distinctions between the various compartments of our lives

Academic Year 2020-21: the year of the asterisk.

were blurred. Maintaining healthy boundaries when your office doubles as a kitchen, bedroom or living room, and a family member really, really, REALLY needs you right now is a struggle. Members of our community have felt invisible, unheard, and increasingly unsafe. Housing, food and financial insecurities, and the added stressors of physical and emotional isolation are realities for far too many.

AAC adopted a set of values three years ago. Since that time, we have tried to fully embrace those values and integrate them into our practices and decision-making process. We will highlight achievements that demonstrate our commitment to those ideals throughout this report; exemplars of each value are described below:



Professional Growth: Under the leadership of Steve Hadley, a new, comprehensive advisor onboarding schedule was developed with specific learning outcomes for each session. This rubric is currently implemented for AAC and Bridge advisors, but could easily serve as a model for onboarding new advisors campus-wide. When shared with colleagues on an APLU-Powered by Publics working group on advising, comments included “Wow” and “Impressive”. This is the cutting edge of advisor development.



Excellence in Advising: Advisors from the University of Utah have been recognized for their excellence at the local, state, regional and national level. The UAAC Awards Committee oversees the nomination and selection of an “Advisor of the Month” throughout the year. As with the annual awards, advisors are nominated by fellow advisors, students, faculty, and administrators. Several of our advisors were also recognized by the Utah Advising Association and NACADA. These are tremendous achievements, as evidenced by the comments below:

“The University of Utah’s Advising Community (UAAC) is honored to nominate Madeline Rencher for the NACADA Global Outstanding New Advisor Award. In 2020, Madeline received both the University of Utah’s Outstanding New Advisor Award as well as our university’s Career Champions Award. Within her advising, Madeline encourages students to envision universities as places of possibilities and emboldens her students to get outside of their comfort zone and explore the world around them. At heart, Madeline is a teacher who thrives in environments where she can inspire life-long learning and foster personal growth. Her commitment to (and enthusiasm for!) helping students to navigate their journey will shine through her award support materials.”

Excerpt from nomination letter written by Stephanie Begaye and Ashley Glenn (co-chairs)

“This morning, I received some wonderful news from NACADA. Shelley Nicholson was selected as the recipient of the Region 10 Excellence in Advising Award! This is quite an honor, as each year, there is only one experienced advisor in the region selected for this award. As I worked with Shelley on this nomination process, I was continually impressed by the compassion, care, joy, and humor she brings to her work with students, her collaboration with fellow advisors, and to her role as a supervisor.”

Ashley Glenn, UAAC Awards Committee (co-chair)



Assessment: This year, the AAC Assessment Committee focused on creating and updating the AAC Mission and Vision statements. At the annual AAC Staff Retreat, the committee hosted a workshop geared toward educating staff about the difference between mission and vision. The working group of Lisa Hutton, Ashley Glenn and Allie McClaskey consulted examples from other universities and dedicated time to gathering staff feedback on what team members felt was most critical to include. They synthesized the feedback through multiple iterations of the statements. The newly adopted AAC Mission and Vision statements are shown below.

AAC Mission

The Academic Advising Center at the University of Utah promotes a transformative undergraduate experience by advocating for and empowering undergraduate students as they explore, develop, and take responsibility for achieving their academic goals. We provide high-quality advising services to undergraduate students and the campus community through appointments, outreach, presentations, curriculum, and collaboration with campus partners. We serve as the academic home for exploring students—those exploring majors, professional paths, or tools for success.

AAC Vision

Through advising, every student will be empowered with the knowledge and confidence to create a unique undergraduate journey, and ultimately, to value exploration and learning as lifelong rather than contained to a classroom. We aim for every member of AAC to be recognized as a campus leader committed to amplifying student voices, and in turn, for the university campus community to recognize and value the role of advising as critical to ensuring student success.

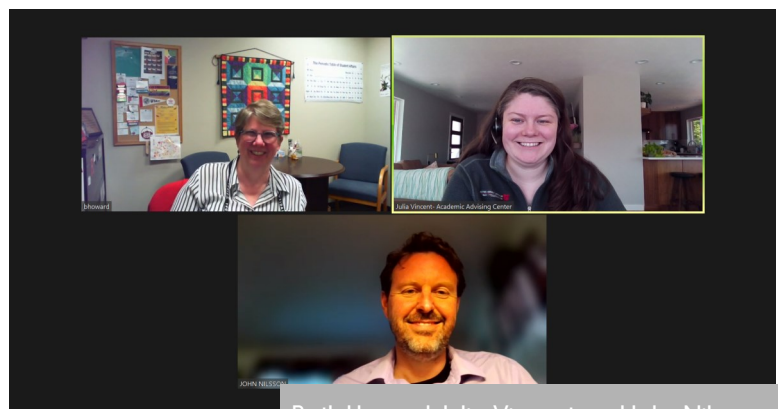


Inclusivity: Equitable hiring practices are critical to creating and maintaining a welcoming and supportive environment for students and staff. Earlier this year, Ashley Glenn attended a NACADA pre-conference workshop titled “Designing An Intentional & Equitable Hiring Practice”. This was the foundation for an AAC working group charged with taking a hard look at our hiring practices to make sure we are both attractive to diverse applicants, and that our review process is not disadvantaging some applicants while advantaging others. They developed an action plan with recommendations that are currently being implemented on a pilot basis.



Collaboration: Historically, the university’s requirements for Dean’s List distinction included completion of a minimum of 12 letter-graded credits. This effectively eliminates a substantial number of our high achieving students from ever receiving the honor, simply because their health, family, work, financial, or other circumstances prohibit full-time enrollment. In response to feedback from affected students, Jason Atherton developed a proposal for Undergraduate Council to consider instituting a new academic standards category of “Part-Time Deans List”. Feedback and support were received from ASUU, advising coordinators from the degree granting colleges, the Center for Disability and Access, and Continuing Education. Tim Ebner surveyed practices at our peer AAU institutions. The proposal was approved with strong support by the Undergraduate Council.

I am deeply proud of the Academic Advising Center team. There are so many examples of change initiated by ever-emerging needs that will have a long-lasting positive impact on what our status quo looks like. This year, our Annual Report will chronicle our adaptations, with a focus on how we will apply what we have learned as we reconstruct a campus presence.



Beth Howard, Julia Vincent and John Nilsson

II. Operations

Student Contacts | Technology | Office Reception and Quick Answer Desk | Mandatory Advising Program | Highlight: Budget | Highlight: Implementation of Civitas Inspire

This section includes the initiatives and efforts that most directly impact the student interface with advising.

Highlights: Putting Values into Action



Excellence in Advising

The AAC website underwent a complete overhaul of the last year. The new design makes information more accessible, is more visually appealing, and easier to navigate.



Collaboration

Supporting students through the Exception to Policy process often involves collaboration with other offices. This year, our partners included staff from Athletics, Office of the Dean of Students, Center for Student Wellness, Housing and Residential Education, the English Language Institute, Veterans Center and New Student Orientation.

Impact

The questions we receive in the AAC rarely have simple answers. We often have to contact multiple people from a cross-section of offices before we can provide the best possible answer. Exchanges like the one shown below illustrate the success of our approach, and our commitment to providing students with the best possible experience.

Email to Assistant Dean:

"My son, (student's name), will be an incoming freshman in the fall and was just accepted into the NROTC (Navy officer training) program there at the University. That program requires him to take Calculus 1 and 2 and Physics 1 and 2 as part of their program. Ideally, it would be best if he could take those – or at least Calc 1 and Physics 1 by the end of freshman year. (Student's name) took precalculus advanced as a senior in high school and received an A both semesters. Our question is can he sign up for Calc 1 and Physics 1 first semester or are there prerequisite classes he needs to take before hand? Also, I read something about an Accu Placer test for math placement. What is that exactly and how does it work?"

The response from the Assistant Dean addressed each one of the parent's questions, and included links to multiple secondary resources. The parent responded:

"Wow! Thank you for your quick response. I will pass this on to (student's name) and let him take it from here.

Being out of state, I have to say how happy and relieved it makes me to see how responsive and helpful your University is.

*Thanks again,
(Parent)"*

Student Contacts

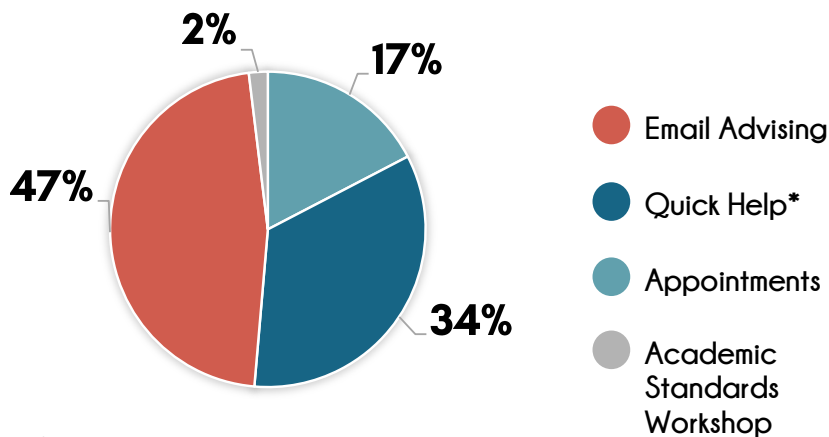
Highlights 2020-21

The services of the Academic Advising Center are available to and utilized by all members of the campus community- students (prospective, incoming, continuing, and graduates), their supporters, and university employees.

Data, Trends, and Analysis

The staff in the AAC had over **98,500** recorded interactions with students, campus partners, and outside constituencies during 2020-21 academic year. This included **7,400** phone, email and video appointments, more than **14,500** quick help contacts with students and over **76,600** recorded email contacts; all were conducted remotely. By providing a variety of different modalities for interacting with students, we can most efficiently serve their advising needs and maximize the availability of advisors for more time-intensive interactions.

Student Contact Summary 2020-21

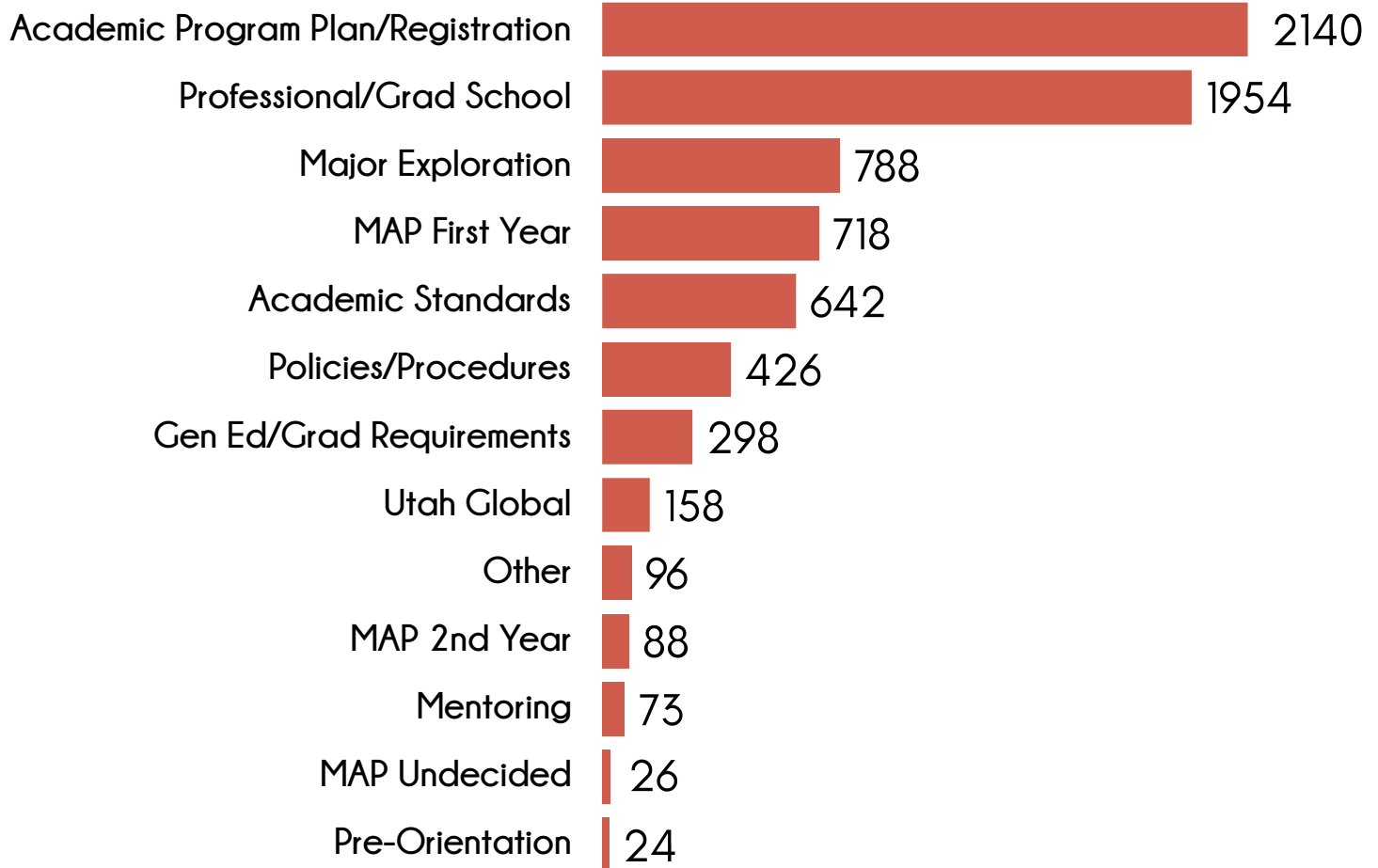


*"Quick Help" is any contact not logged on the database system as an appointment except e-mail.

Offering support via group presentations (Orientations, information sessions, programs to campus partners), emails, and at our remote Reception and Quick Answer desks facilitates student access to in-depth, one-on-one sessions with advisors. This approach enables the AAC to minimize wait time for appointments and maximize impact. The distribution of our contacts is shown to the left.

Students are asked to self-identify class year and reason for appointment when they check in with our front desk. Over half of the students we see are freshmen, sophomores, or transfers. The most frequently cited reasons for appointments are academic planning and/or registration, PreProfessional advising, and major exploration. The distribution of appointments by type is shown on the next page. This year, we saw a sharp decline in "Quick Helps" (**34%** of our interactions, as compared to **55%** in the prior year), and a comparable increase in the frequency of email advising (**47%** of interactions, as compared to **24%** in the prior year).

Contacts by Type in 2020-21



Requests for Exceptions to Policy

Registration policies and deadlines are published on the University Registrar's website. In advising conversations, however, students sometimes disclose situations or circumstances that are outside of their control, could not have been predicted in advance, and can be tied directly to the student's ability to engage fully with one or more classes. These situations call for an exception to policy, either in the form of a late withdrawal or a petition. The Academic Advising Center handles all exception requests for exploratory students and those who are enrolled as non-degree seeking.

Course reductions initiated after the withdrawal deadline (but before the end of the term) are reviewed by a committee internal to the AAC. Martina Stewart chaired the committee until her retirement in January 2021; Shelley Nicholson assumed leadership for the Spring Semester. The number of requests reviewed by the committee declined, due primarily to extensions of the withdrawal deadline in both the Summer 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters.



Late Withdrawal Requests 2020-21

Term	Submitted	Approved
Summer	1	1
Fall	34	26
Spring	7	5



Petition Results

In AY 2019-2020, 48 students initiated the petition process. Of those, 44 petitions were completed, reviewed, and approved by the Registrar's Committee. This year's numbers differed significantly in that of the 47 petitions initiated, only 26 were completed and submitted for review. The remaining 21 students either didn't respond to requests for more information (13), missed the advising appointment (4), decided not to pursue the petition following meeting with the associate dean (3), or the issue was resolved with support from another office (1).

Petitions Initiated 2020-21

Reason	Approved	Denied	Incomplete
Retroactive Withdrawal	17	1	19
Deletion	4	1	0
Reversal of Grading Option	3	0	2

Of note, roughly a third (7 of 22) of completed petitions were submitted by non-degree seeking students. Four were on behalf of High University Program students and the remaining three were participating in a program coordinated through Continuing Education. Further expansion of HSUP and certificate programs will need to be monitored to ensure the increased workload on AAC is appropriately resourced.

The conversations with students regarding the petition process shed light into the unique and difficult situations experienced by students. Over the last year, many of the students disclosed that mental health concerns precipitated by social unrest, financial repercussions of COVID-19, isolation, and the uncertainty about the future affected their academics negatively. In all likelihood, we will be handling petitions from the "pandemic semesters" for at least the next year and possibly much longer.

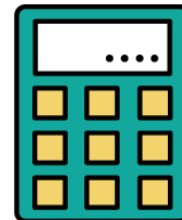
Technology

Highlights 2020-21

During the 2020-21 school year, our technology team accomplished several technology related services for the Academic Advising Center. This year, with money received from the CARES Act, our department received new laptops and monitors for all advisors. This allowed our team to expand and maximize remote technology needs for all students via online, phone or email with no interruptions to service. Additionally, all day-to-day operations from our Reception Team have continued without interruption to student service.

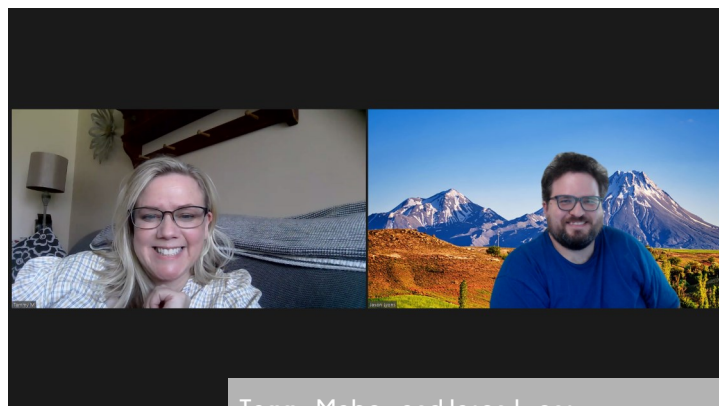
Other technology-related accomplishments this year include but are not limited to: collaboration with the web design team to redesign and update all AAC webpages, continuing to assist advisors with program projects and support, provide technology support for AAC and the University Academic Advising Community such as the UAAC

Conference and in-services, onboarding new staff, PeopleSoft testing of processes and reports as well as troubleshooting and resolving any issues that arise, transition of AAC to Office 365 and Microsoft Teams, and serving on various office and campus-wide committees. Jason Lyons served on the UAAC Assessment Committee and completed a Master's Degree in Public Administration. Jason accepted a new position within his field and we hired Joseph Bradford as our new Computer Technician. Tammy Mabey served as the chair of the Teambuilding Committee in AAC, the UAAC Conference Co-Chair for the second consecutive year and continues to serve on the UAAC Executive Committee as the Co-Chair of the Advisor Advocacy and Promotion Committee.



Future Goals

- Assist with AAC transition back to in-person services
- Research a possible texting feature to communicate more effectively with students
- Research a possible live chat feature for staff to more effectively serve student needs
- Update to a more user-friendly design of MAP APP
- Inclusion of Computer Technician to program meetings with the goal of understanding how to assist with technology needs



Tammy Mabey and Jason Lyons

Office Reception and Quick Answer Desk



Our front desk staff is always G.L.A.D. to help!

The Academic Advising Center's front desk reception team assists students and their families as well as faculty and staff that contact AAC in a quick, knowledgeable and friendly manner. We also support the advising staff as they assist students in reaching their academic goals.

Highlights 2020-21

The Academic Advising Center's Reception Team have been successfully and affectively working remotely for over a year, with minimal visits to our physical offices on campus. However, the first two weeks of the fall 2020 term, our Reception Team was physically present to provide assistance over the phone and in person.

Additionally, we developed a reception email at the start of the pandemic allowing us to provide aid to students at an accelerated rate. We receive many emails from students daily and their questions are answered within 24 hours, but usually within the same day. This service is also highlighted on our website making it easier for students to receive assistance quickly.

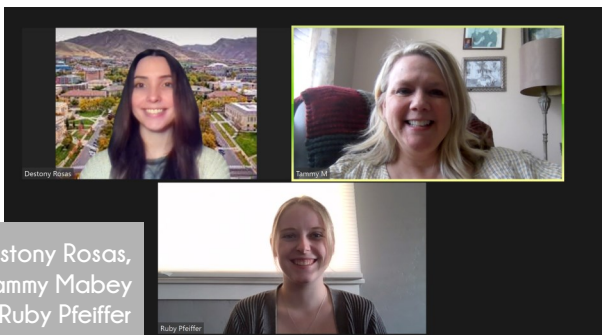
This year, we also restructured our reception team and combined the PreProfessional Advising office reception with our staff, making it one unit. Our AAC Reception Team now answers calls, makes appointments and assists all students for both offices. In addition, we now have a Reception Team Coordinator whose responsibilities include leading the reception team staff and ensuring an excellent student

experience. Destony Rosas served in this role until June 2021, and Ruby Pfeiffer has now stepped into that position. The second member of our Reception Team, Will Southwick, is our new Office Assistant who supports the coordinator in their role as well as students and the AAC staff.

Part of AAC's reception is our Quick Answer (QA) Desk in which advisors provide quick advising answers to students who do not require an appointment. During 2020-21, this has also been facilitated remotely and has been very successful.

Our Reception Team is often the first point of contact for students at the University of Utah. We answer every phone call and provide excellent customer service to thousands of individuals seeking assistance each year. Therefore, we not only support our academic advising students, but many times we assist and direct individuals to their correct departments, ensuring that they receive the needed support. We also facilitate thousands of appointments, assist with special projects within the office, serve on committees, gather data, and continue to implement our G.L.A.D. philosophy daily.

The Academic Advising Center's Reception Team is an integral part of student success both within our office and across the University of Utah campus.



8600+

Phone Calls



1900+

Email Quick Helps

Facilitated through our reception and QA desk in 2020-21

Mandatory Advising Program

Mission Statement

We administer a campus-wide Mandatory Advising Program (MAP) that connects students to academic advisors at key points in their undergraduate experience, and ensures that advisors understand program learning outcomes and how to advise students to meet program goals.

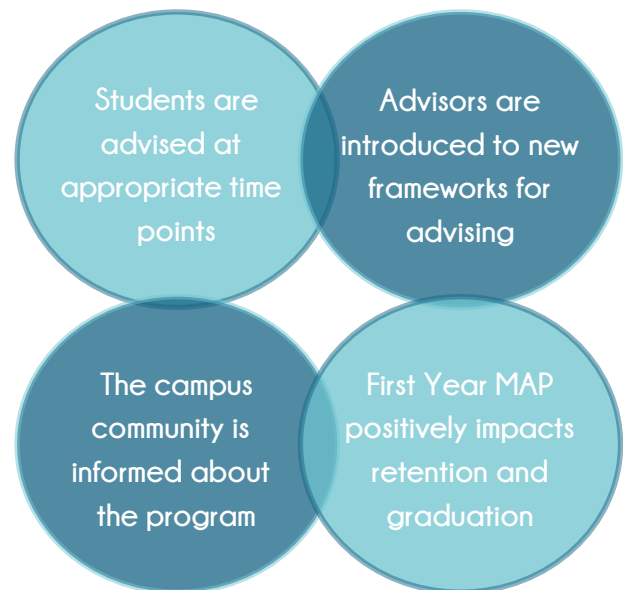
We accomplish this through campus-wide communications to students and advisors, on-going trainings for academic advisors, collaboration with a campus-wide Mandatory Advising Committee, and collection and analysis of program data.

2020-21 Academic Year

During the Fall 2020 semester, the MAP committee created two in-services to kick off MAP season for over 70 advisors across campus. The first in-service focused on advising MAP 1st year students through online formats and led a discussion around points from an article, *Advising Online Students: Replicating Best Practices*. Advisors shared ideas and advising practices on what has worked in how we can support students remotely. The committee also shared student data gathered the past year on how students experience the MAP program overall.

The second in-service follow up with reflections from the beginning of the semester and transitioned to a campus wide discussion on how we can better serve our second year students during a pandemic for MAP 2nd year. The MAP committee surveyed a small group of sophomores

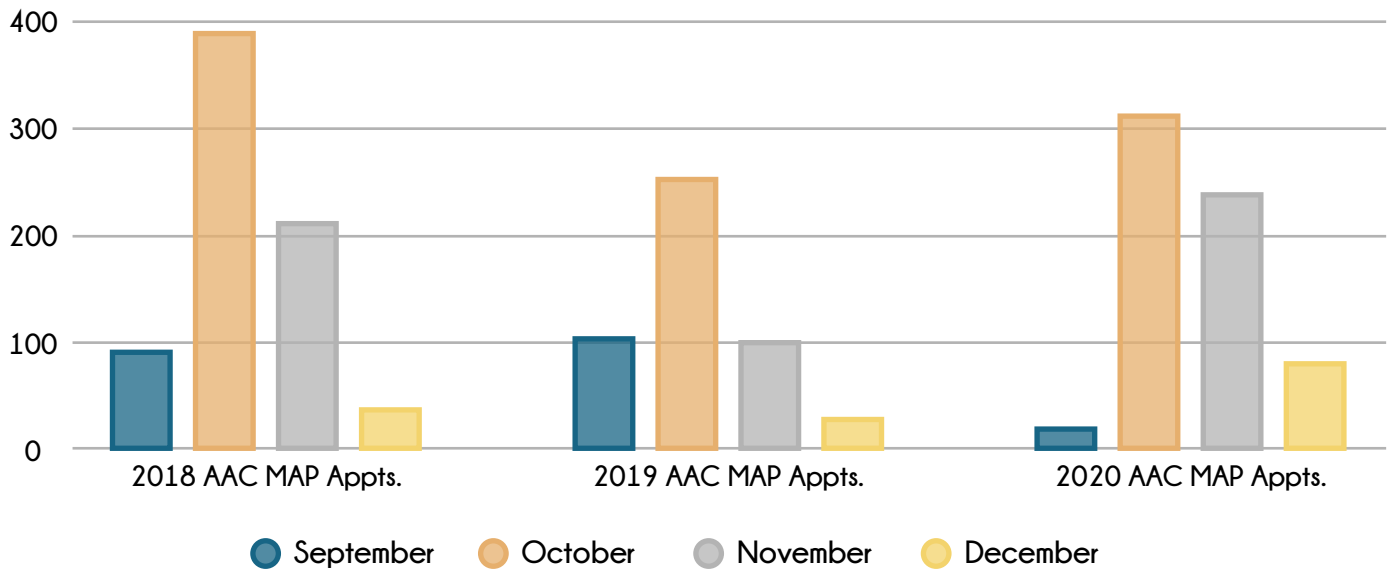
Our program assessment provides measurable evidence that:



and juniors to share student experiences of how they were adjusting to remote learning and involvement. Through this, advisors discussed how to help students make better connections and focus on their wellness during the school year. Both trainings were well received and yielded rich discussion and reflection.

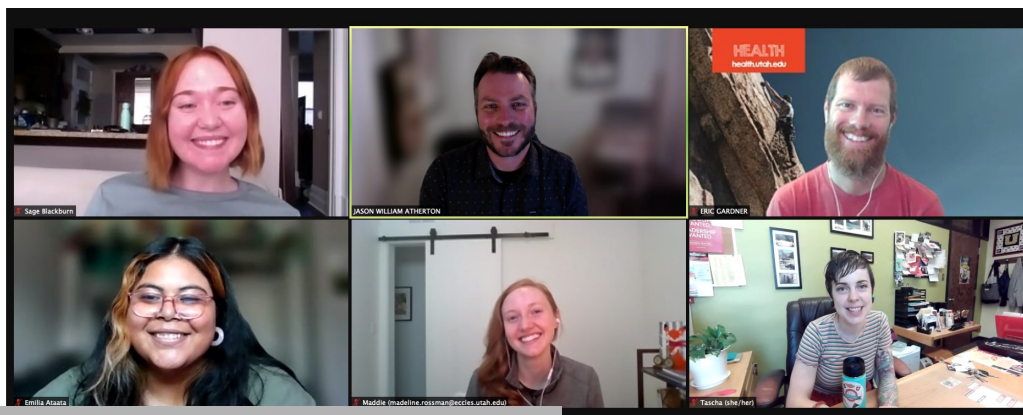
Prior to COVID-19, roughly 70% of eligible students were advised prior to the MAP deadline and took advantage of the priority registration period. Last year, however, many more students delayed their advising until November and December. Although only 65% of students were eligible for priority registration, 76% had registered by the end of the term. The change in advising/registration pattern of AAC students is illustrated in the chart on the next page.

AAC MAP First Year Appointments



The MAP director also created a robust advisor MAP training and resource section on the AAC website that focuses on remote advising. The website received over 260 hits during the fall term; it included digital copies of MAP training manuals, timelines, and advising handouts to help facilitate appointments. Over the course of the year, trainings were recorded and could be accessed by all advisors which proved to be affective, especially as staff continued to work from home. At the end of the spring semester, the MAP website was redesigned to be more student-friendly and in line with other AAC and university programs.

At the end of the 2020, the Director of the Milestone Advising Program, Martina Stewart, retired after serving more than 26 years at the university. Martina was the creator of MAP in 2006 and has been a leader in our field for how to develop and implement a mandatory campus wide advising program. During her tenure, she won several awards from NACADA and the university for her achievements. She has helped countless students receive critical advising for their success at the university. In April 2021, Jason Atherton was hired into the role and has begun planning for the upcoming year.



MAP Committee: Sage Blackburn, Jason Atherton, Eric Gardner, Emilia Ataata, Maddie Rossman, Tascha Knowlton

Highlight: Budget in the Year of COVID

While we place great value on professional development for all AAC team members, we also have limited resources and have to be strategic in our use of those funds. We were actually able to support more rather than less professional development in the 2020-2021 Academic Year. Virtual professional development, both on-campus as off, translated into lower food costs and registration fees, and the elimination of travel costs. The result was that many of our team members had greater access to high quality professional development than would have been possible in other years.

One or more AAC team members attended each of the following:



- APLU Annual Meeting
- MBTI Training
- NACADA Administrator's Institute
- NACADA Annual Conference
- NACADA Assessment Institute
- NACADA Region 8 Conference
- STRONG Training
- UAAC Conference
- USHE "What Is an Educated Person?" Conference
- Utah Advising Association (UAA) Conference

Highlight: Implementation of Civitas Inspire

The AAC played a lead role in the testing, implementation, and rollout of the new data analytics platform, Inspire. Throughout the spring and summer of 2020, Beth Howard and Tammy Mabey joined Amy Bergerson, Melanie Lee, Mary Chris Finnigan, Kyle Ethelbah, and members of the Civitas Team to test Inspire in preparation for rollout to the advising community. In October, six group trainings were delivered, to a total of 65 participants. Two versions of the training were available- one for people with experience using an earlier platform (Inspire for Advisors), and one for those new to data analytics platforms. Trainings included the framework for using data

analytics in advising, best practices, and ethical considerations. Since the initial six trainings, additional sessions have been provided for advisors in the College(s)/ Schools of Fine Arts, Health, Science, Nursing, Social Work, Social and Behavioral Science, Business, Engineering and Humanities. In total, over 100 campus advisors, plus partners in the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Office of the Dean of Students, the Bennion Center, the Student Learning Center, Student Success Advocates, English Language Institute and Undergraduate Research (UROP) have integrated the tool into their standard practices.

III. Team Discovery

Major Exploration Program | Transfer Program | Orientation and Outreach |
Peer Advising Program | Highlight: Changes to Utah Global

In the last year Team Discovery has embraced collaboration at each turn to adapt programming and create new opportunities to serve the students of the University of Utah in their exploration. Our four programs worked innovatively to build on each other's success and knowledge. Nothing demonstrates this better than the partnerships necessary for successful new student orientation and outreach in the time of virtual education.

Student Quote:

"The group Zoom session was incredibly helpful because the advisors were informed about each student's needs and how to help them with their specific situation. It was a comfortable environment to ask questions in and was an excellent supplement to the Canvas course."

Highlights: Putting Values into Action



Professional Growth: In the last year the Major Exploration Program piloted their new Training Handbook with the Peer advisors. This allowed growth in new professional skills for the peers. It also allowed the Major Exploration team to get feedback on training materials before onboarding new advisors.



Excellence in Advising: Madeline Rencher, Assistant Director of Orientation + Outreach, was the recipient of the NACADA Outstanding New Advisor Award for 2021



Inclusivity: 2020-2021 challenged us to teach our students in new ways. A fully asynchronous UGS 1050 Major Exploration course was developed and all other courses moved to IVC. 205 student enrolled in UGS 1050 and 158 students enrolled in classes offered by PreProfessional Advising.

MEP Highlights 2020-21



17

Students Attended Pathways to Health Professions Virtual Open House



107

Students Attended 2 Mini Virtual Major Expos



205

Total students in UGS 1050 during 2020-21

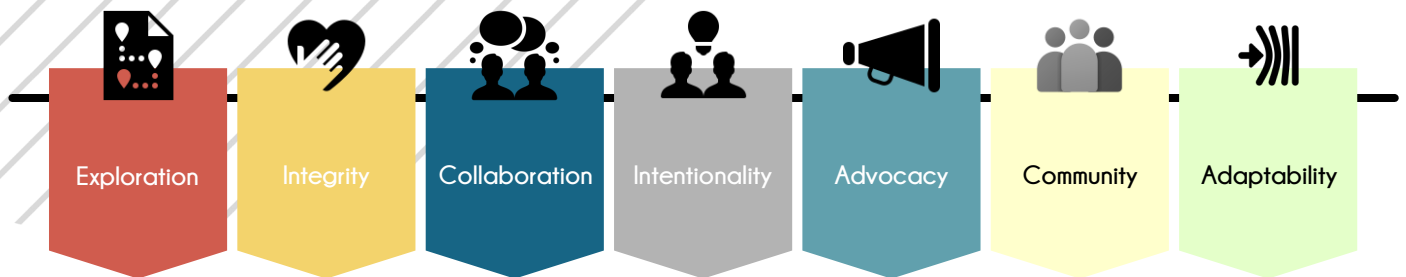
Created fully asynchronous curriculum

Major Exploration Program

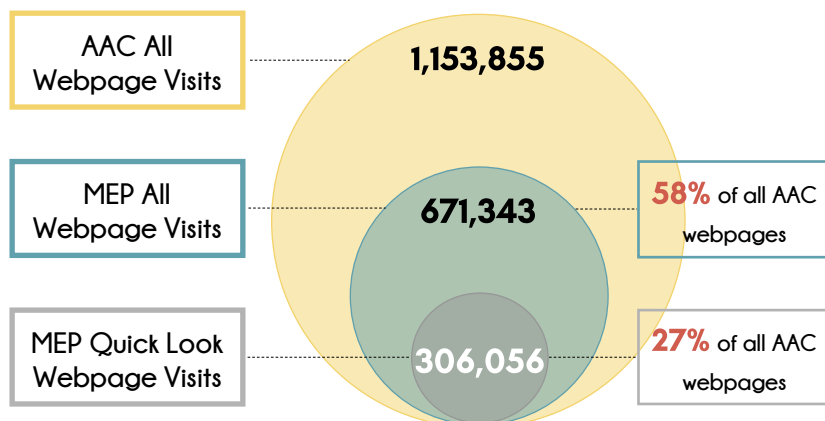
MEP Vision

We strive for every student on campus to make individual, intentional decisions of major and minor declaration(s); that faculty, campus partners, and all advisors reinforce the importance of exploration and purposeful decision making; and to be known as the primary resource for exploring students at the University of Utah while creating a community of exploration.

MEP Values



Highlights 2020-21



UGS 1550 **14** students
Pilot year

LLC: Looking to the future

Increased space from 22 to 48 beds in 2021-22

Overview

The Major Exploration Program focuses on objectively assisting students in the intentional declaration of academic programs (s), and we guided our efforts in the 2020-2021 academic year with our program vision and values. At the end of the previous academic year, we laid the foundation to update our online resources, provide accessible virtual events, improve advisor major exploration training, and begin collecting major exploration student data at the U.

Over the course of the past year, we completed our Major Exploration Program Training Handbook and piloted it with our peer advisors and recent new hires. In May 2021, in collaboration with UIT and our own Director of Operations,

Tammy Mabey, we successfully launched a fully redesigned website with a concentration on the structural updates to the Major Exploration Program pages.

Our focus on collecting major exploration student data led to a fruitful collaboration with one of OBIA's excellent analysts, Ben White. Through a series of meetings, we crafted questions aimed at discovering how students experience major exploration and declaration, how many students are changing majors, and how this impacts retention and graduation rates. The result is a comprehensive dashboard of data that will frame the future efforts of the Major Exploration Program. Highlights of this data follow:

Major Exploration and Declaration Data



Percent of Students Declared at Entry

From 2010 to 2015, undeclared students made up 28% of entering first-year students. After pre-majors shifted to colleges and direct admissions/early declaration entered the conversation, only 18% of entering first-year students between 2016 and 2020 were undeclared.

From 2010-2015, only 11% of first-year students had declared a major at census. From 2016-2020, 25% of first-year students had a declared major at census.

Implications

The decrease in percentage of undeclared first-year students means far fewer students will be connected with the major exploration program through Orientation or other touchpoints.

Graduation and Retention Rates

First-year students who begin undeclared have the same 6-year graduation rate (51%) as students who are in a pre-major by census in their first semester – there is no historic advantage to pre-major status.

Pre-Majors and Undeclared first-year students are retained at almost the exact same rate. Undeclared students were retained at a 2% higher rate than Pre-Majors were in 2019.

Implications

In regards to retention and graduation rates, there is no statistical advantage to pre-major status over undeclared.





Major Changing

70% of first-year students who graduated in 6 years changed their major.

66% of first-year students who did not graduate did not change their major.

Transfer students see more of an even split: 50% of transfer students who graduated changed their major.

However, 71% of transfer students who did not graduate did not change their major.

Implications

The majority of our students who graduate are changing their majors! There is a clear need for major exploration even for students who are declared.



Total Majors Declared

Of first-year students with declared majors at census who graduated, only 25% graduated with the first major they declared.

Of first-year students with undeclared/pre-major at census who graduated, 60% graduated with the first primary major they declared.

Implications

Students who explore options prior to fully declaring a major are more like to graduate with the major they declare. Commitment to major choice appears connected to the time spent exploring major options.



Graduation Rates by Major Change

For first time students who are declared in a major by first census:

47% of students who remained in their declared major at entry graduated vs. 72% of students who changed their major once and 79% of students who changed their major twice.

For first time students who are undeclared at first census:

68% of students in this group who declared only one major graduated; 71% of students in this group who declared two different primary majors graduated.

Implications

Again, we see that students who remain undeclared prior to declaring a major are more likely to graduate with their first declared major. Students who are declared at entry will graduate at higher rates if they *change their major at least once*—this is true for four year, six year, and overall graduation rates. This supports the major exploration program vision of creating a campus culture of exploration.



Moving Forward

The creation of the data dashboard made an immediate impact and will continue to guide our efforts over the upcoming year. In April 2021, the MEP team hosted a campus-wide in-service to present the results to all interested advisors. Many departmental advisors commented on the prevalence of major changing and importance of all advisors understanding major exploration theories and practices, and some requested additional meetings on the topic. Using the momentum and interest gained from the in-service, we are excited to collaborate with the campus-wide Mandatory Advising Program on an exploration theme for advisors and students throughout the 2021-2022 year.

The MEP team is thrilled to apply this knowledge toward our direct efforts as well. Having data that supports the prevalence and importance of major exploration motivated us to prepare a successful Parent Fund grant aimed at raising awareness of our program and our revamped online resources. In 2021-2022, we will embark on a marketing campaign using

Union lamppost banners, and will develop major exploration information sessions to provide students an additional access point to our program.

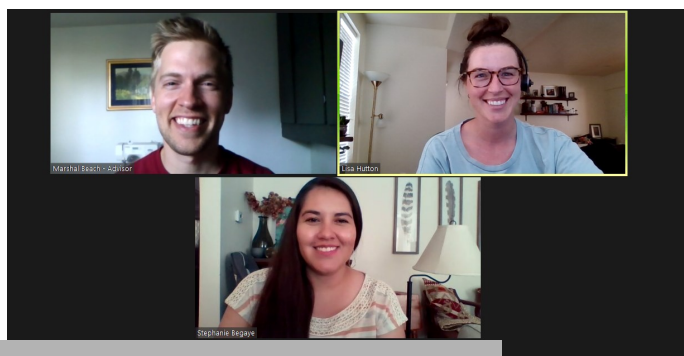
The increase in awareness and interest in major exploration on campus directly supports our program vision of creating a community of exploration at the U. We will adapt to campus changes that affect our student population, and will continue to advocate for the importance of exploration as a key component of lifelong learning.

Quote from a student about their experience in UGS 1050, taught by Julia Vincent:

“Thank you so much for the helpful advice. I really enjoyed your class! I hope we can talk more in the future.”

Student Quote:

“[Ashley] has been super helpful and welcoming when I meet with her. I am a first year undecided student and she helps me realize it's okay to not know what I want to do right now. She really puts in work to get to know her students and it's always nice to just chat with her.”



Marshal Beach, Lisa Hutton, Stephanie Begaye

Student Appointments/Interactions in AAC

Major Exploration Advising	Students Advised by Year
	2020-21
Undecided Students Advised	2813
Major Exploration Appointments	1620
Presentation Contact	3193

Goals for 2021-22

- Build stronger relationships between major exploration and departmental advisors
- Collaborate with MAP to implement campus-wide exploration advising theme
- Execute Outdoor Major Expo 2021
- Create virtual Major Exploration Info Sessions

Transfer Program



In 2020-21, the Transfer Program continued to find ways to provide resources and services to transfer students in a virtual environment.

The Academic Advising Center met with:

1,646 transfer students in 2020-2021

The Transfer Website

The Transfer Program [website](#) continues to be a major focus of our transfer advising efforts and is a much-accessed resource.

40,000 transfer webpage views in 2020-21

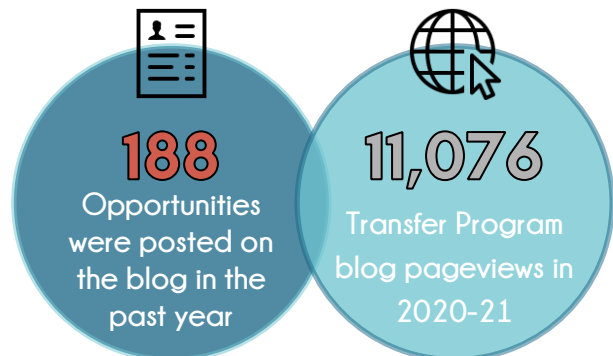


Several important additions and improvements have been made to the website that enhance the user's experience:

- A complete redesign was done to improve navigation and to make it more attractive and welcoming.
- To make up for the discontinuation of transfer advising visits to Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) a special section of the website was created with resources and information just for prospective transfer students from that school. The site attempts to provide the types of advising information and guidance that we once provided to SLCC students during our visits.
- Transfer Program advisors developed the idea of adding information about the flexibility of U majors to the AAC website. As a result, the Major Exploration Team was able to add a flexibility filter to the *Majors, Minors and Certificates* [website](#). The flexibility factor affects pre-transfer academic planning and can have a huge impact on how quickly a student can graduate after transferring to the U.

Connecting Transfer Students to Involvement Opportunities

Making sure that transfer students appreciate the importance of involvement continues to be a major goal of the Transfer Program. We prefer to call them "resume-building opportunities" as this seems to resonate more with the transfer-student population. We want to make sure that transfer students know how to find and participate in resume-building opportunities on campus. To these ends, we have updated and improved the [accelerated involvement timeline](#) on the transfer website. We also continue to provide an ongoing list of opportunities specifically curated for transfer students on our resume-building [Blog](#).



Transfer Newsletter

In October 2020, the Transfer Team began issuing the *Transfer U* newsletter, a digital marketing campaign aimed at prospective transfers to the U.

Transfer U comes in two formats:

- 1 A general newsletter with guidelines for transferring to the U, and
- 2 A topics-based newsletters covering content important for transfer students.

Collaboration

Collaboration with other programs in AAC has been an ongoing theme in the Transfer Program this year. We have had significant collaborative efforts with almost all program areas of AAC:

The Peer Program – This year, AAC’s peer advisors began writing posts for the Transfer Blog. Thanks to the work of the peers, we were able to increase our posts and broaden the types of opportunities we are able to advertise.

- The Pre Professional Advising Center (PPA) – Transfer Program advisors are in the process of being cross-trained in Pre Health advising and have begun advising 1st year pre health students. This initiative has enabled us to assist the short-staffed PPA Office and better-serve the large numbers of transfer students interested in going on to health science professional schools.

The Major Exploration Program (MEP) – We are working with MEP to promote major exploration for transfer students.

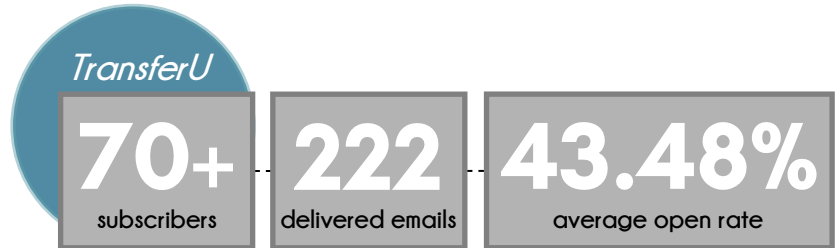
- Transfer students often come to the U having chosen a major. We want to encourage these students to use resources to verify that they their chosen major is right for them.

Goals for 2021-22

- Continue to collaborate with the Major Exploration Program on major exploration initiatives for transfer students.
- Move forward with a pilot program to include undecided transfer students in 1st Year Mandatory Advising.
- Further develop our knowledge and skills as Pre Professional advisors and increase the number of PPA appointments that we see.

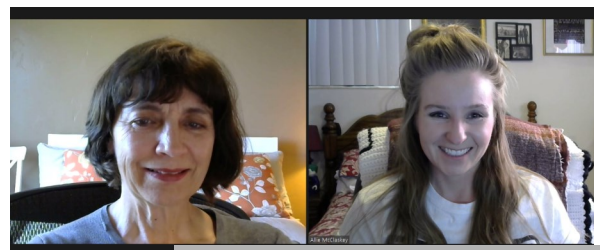
Transfer Training

This year we completely revised our transfer training program. We created new learning outcomes for the training and also re-organized and extended it from one training session to four. We created a new Transfer Advising Wiki that acts both as a training tool and as a reference manual that can easily be kept up-to-date.



- We are concerned that transfer students are unaware of the U’s many minors and certificates. We have plans to work with Office of Budget and Institutional Analysis (OBIA) to study minor/certificate declaration in transfer students and will work with MEP to promote information about minors and certificates to this group.
- We are currently exploring the possibility of developing a Transfer Interest Group class (TIG) for undecided transfer students at SLCC. The class would offer U of U credit but be taught at SLCC. The class would assist with major exploration and would also provide information about the transfer process.

The Mandatory Advising Program (MAP) – We are currently working with MAP to develop a pilot program to include transfer students in the 1st Year Mandatory Advising Program (currently only freshmen are required to have advising in their first semester at the U). The pilot would target undecided transfer students in their first semester and would require them to meet with an advisor in AAC before registering for any future semester.



Terese Pratt and Allie McClaskey

Orientation and Outreach

Orientation and Outreach Vision

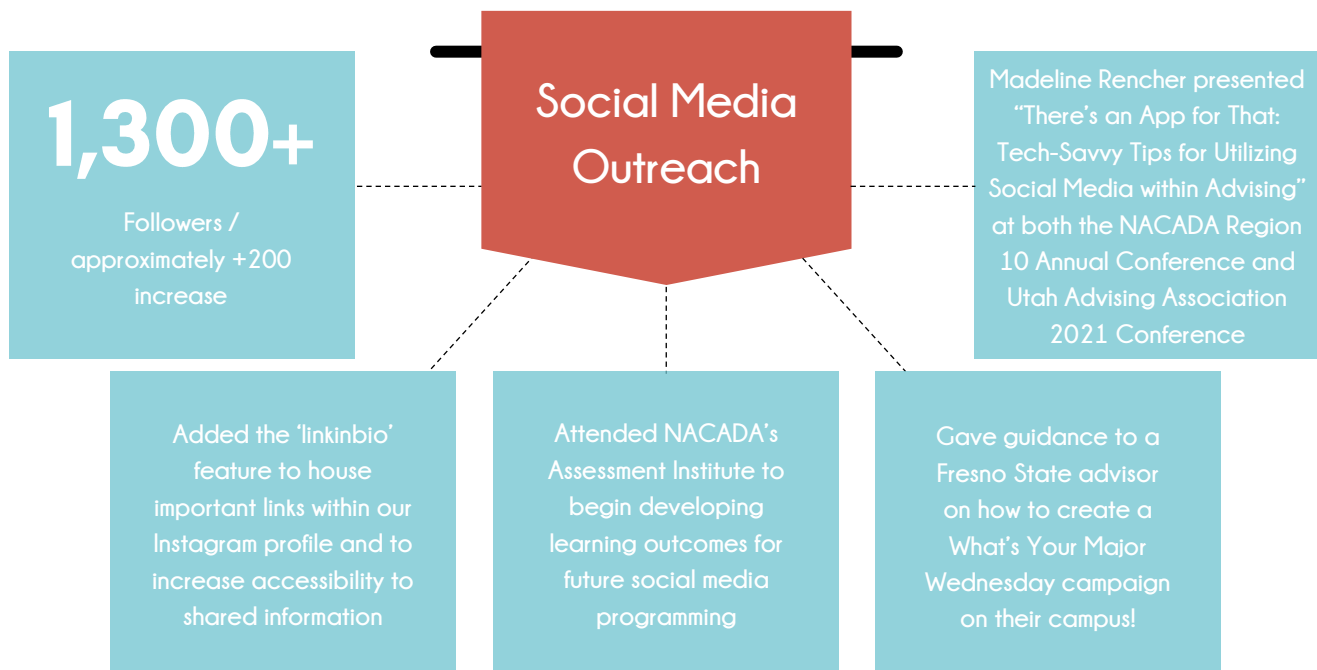
We aspire to provide high quality advising wherein students will feel encouraged by the thought of what college can be, motivated to begin exploring majors early, and empowered to make informed decisions for their first semester. We hope for each student to start their college journey with both a positive advising experience and a vision of the university as a place of possibility.

This year, we increased our accessibility and readily available resources through the following:

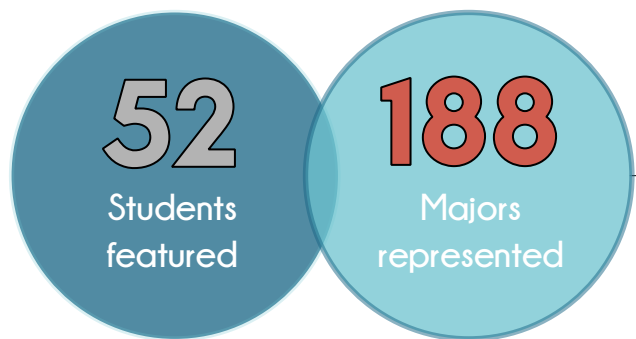
Overview

Working virtually this past year has allowed us to reevaluate how we offer programming and resources to students. No longer are we limited to physically showing up to high schools for early college orientation or to a one-hour presentation at a prospective student event, both with time and space restrictions. Now, students and supporters can at their convenience—even at 2AM!—learn more about major exploration with short videos available through Admissions, are able more easily to follow the steps for virtual orientation on our revamped webpage, and can begin envisioning a major exploration path for themselves by reading about other students' paths @uofuadvising.

- 1 Created orientation recordings and resources for the HSUP/*high school university program* and AMES/*academy for math, engineering, and the sciences* early college programs. Through these, students are empowered to make decisions about which college credits to earn during high school.
- 2 Expanded our social media reach through hosting four university-wide takeovers of the @universityofutah and @utahadmissions accounts.
- 3 Reimagined how we encourage early exploration of majors through creating short major exploration videos, integrating first steps for major exploration into our first-year student orientations, and continuing our WYMW social media campaigns @uofuadvising.
- 4 Presented our first-year advising strategies—informed by a hermeneutic and cultural wealth model approach—at the UAAC Conference, *3,843 First Dates: Keeping the Magic Alive during First Year Advising*.



What's Your Major Wednesday



- Increased majors represented through intentional outreach to colleges
- Created a template for easily-recognizable WYMW posts and cohesive design
- Assisted in selecting content from WYMW posts to be featured on new AAC website

Instagram Takeovers

Major Myths	@universityofutah 4,200+ views and 730+ individuals participating in the interactive quizzes
Mini Major	@universityofutah highlighted the virtual major expo event
Majors at	@universityofutah coordinated content for 11 colleges
About AAC	@utahadmissions / 432 views with the majority of followers being prospective students and supporters

Share Your Major Exploration Story!

Be featured on @uofuadvising by filling out the linkinbio, or with the QR code!

Share advice from your own journey with students deciding on their major by answering questions such as:

- How did you find & decide to pursue your major?
- What did you wish you knew when choosing a major?

We'd love to hear from you!

Moxiao
Year: 1st
Majors: Economics & Mathematics

WHAT MAJOR DID AMERICA FERRERA STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA?

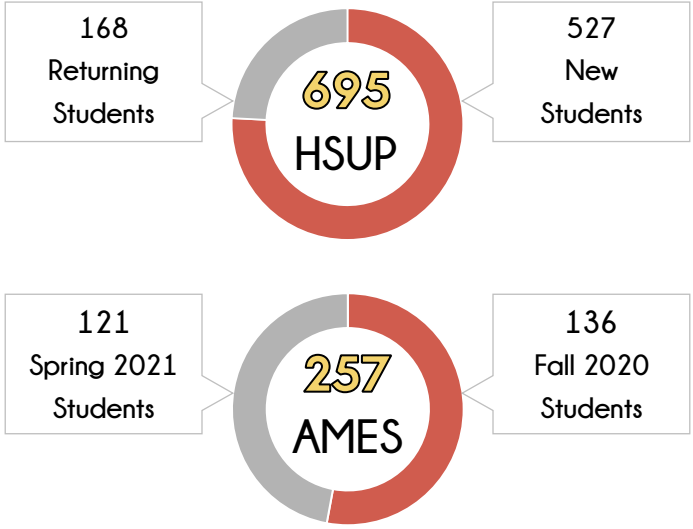
WHICH IS CORRECT?

- Art History
- Urban Ecology
- International Studies
- Nursing

IMAGES: VANITY FAIR & VU/USC

Early College Advising

We provide advising for high school students participating in the early college programs: High School University Program and the Academy for Math, Engineering, and the Sciences. This year, we created [virtual orientation recording and registration resources](#) for HSUP and for students in AMES created an Orientation Canvas module with college literacy, major exploration, and course registration resources. For academic advisors, we collaborated with Jason Atherton to create training on early college credits and shared this with all members of UAAC.



Outreach

We created five major exploration videos where prospective students can learn about steps to begin exploring early, identify ways to build their first year around exploration, uncover myths about majors, and be introduced to the major exploration process. These videos are housed on AAC's Youtube page, as well as on the AAC page within the Admissions new student platform. Additionally, this spring, we represented all academic advising at the monthly Admissions Ask Anything Sessions and revamped our Admissions Counselor training.

2,152

Attendance for
Spring 2021
Admissions "Ask
Anything" sessions

1,348

Total views of
major exploration
videos (created
and launched
January 2020)

Orientation



This year, we collaborated with the Major Exploration team to create a dedicated major exploration portion of new student orientation. Students are encouraged to take an interests quiz, select a themed advising group, and will learn about first steps in major exploration during our Orientation Advising Sessions. As well, we designed an orientation webpage where students can find new student video guides, suggested courses, tools for success like the time management sheet we developed, and can more easily navigate to new student resources and to quick question advising.



10,066

of views for
series of 12 new
student video
guides created



1,136

of individual
orientation
advising
appointments



7,661

of participants who
completed the
"Academic Advising &
Designing Your Degree"
Canvas module

Colleague Quote:

"On behalf of Admissions, I can't thank you enough for putting all of this effort into this project (in reference to the HSUP orientation website and resources). We appreciate it more than you know."

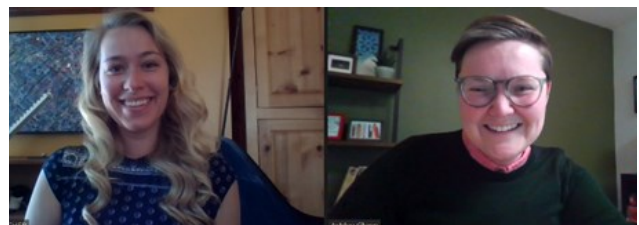
John Marfield,
Executive Director of Admissions

Student Quote:

"I really appreciate all the help and dedication they put into this process. It was very organized and I felt cared for. I enjoyed the enthusiasm that the advisors portrayed."

Goals for 2021-22

- Collaborate with Major Exploration to begin offering monthly major exploration info sessions, available to both continuing and prospective students
- Create, design, and publish a webpage for prospective high school and early college students
- Develop learning outcomes and a data tracking process to inform our social media programming



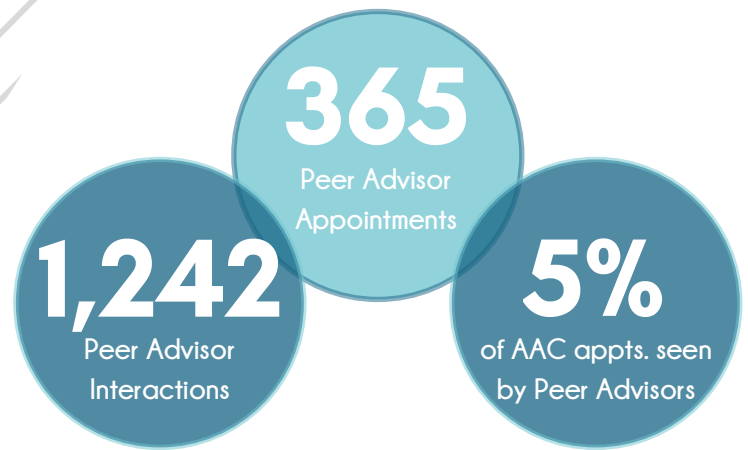
Madeline Rencher and Ashley Glenn

Peer Advising Program

The Peer Advising Program in AAC is currently home to three Peer Advisors. Serving as a professional development platform for University of Utah students, this program dually benefits both Peers and the campus community. Peers gain valuable professional development skills, and they also increase advising accessibility for fellow students: it is more comfortable for a student to meet with someone that looks like them—a Peer! AAC’s Peer Advisors in turn assist AAC through advising and project support.

The Changing Role(s) of the Peers

The Peers have always been great assets to AAC, and this was clearer than ever in the 15 months of pandemic-induced remote work. In early 2020, budget restrictions reduced the number of hours AAC could offer each Peer. To retain all three Peers, we utilized a UROP stipend and asked two of them to split their time between AAC and a research project, which they completed during the 2020 orientation season. In 2020 and 2021, as staffing changes reduced the number of appointments offered and QA shifts covered by AAC and Bridge Advising staff, the Peers also stepped in to fill these gaps. This was especially invaluable ahead of the 2021 orientation season, when AAC had entered a period of extreme understaffing. Erica, Sage, and MacKenzie all took additional appointments and QA shifts, even assisting with orientation group advising—a format of student interaction new to all of them.



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Peer duties included advising, staffing the QA Desk, tabling, authoring the *Peer Review* newsletter, and assisting all AAC program areas with projects. As AAC transitions to a hybrid work model, we anticipate that the Peers’ roles will continue to evolve while still retaining the features most integral to their position: team players who can wear a variety of professional hats, and who above all make advising a relaxing, accessible experience for fellow students.

The Student Perspective on COVID

The pandemic has been an extremely challenging and unpredictable time, especially so for AAC’s three Peers. We often say that advisors wear multiple hats, and this is most true of Peer Advisors: they are students, advisors, and simply humans. Not only were they forced to adapt to remote work during the past year, but their academic and personal lives were also thrown into disarray due to COVID. The Peers’ perspectives as advisors-cum-students are incredibly valuable to the practice of advising, and so they shared with the campus community their experiences as students during COVID. In the October 2020 edition of the *Peer Review*, the Peers discussed what it was like to adapt to online learning at the beginning of the pandemic.

"Like many students, I've had a few difficult semesters in 2020. This fall [2020] has a new set of challenges. [...] Being solely online, I don't feel as connected with my peers in discussions or group projects. I am however more connected to my professors than ever. [...] [They] have been available at different times of the day for Zoom or Skype meetings. [...] My professors know me by name, and it makes it less intimidating to ask questions for assignments and exams."

Sage Blackburn

"The virtual format is not my best environment: I am most successful in collaborative, in-person environments. [...] [and] With having all the lectures pre-recorded, there is no way that I am able to [mimic the in-person experience]."

Erica Lampers

"It's funny that I'm going into my senior year of college, and I feel like a freshman again. Besides the risk of snacking my way to quarantine 15, I'm just trying to find my stride again! [...] I've never been one to reach out to professors when a TA or a tutor is available, but communicating directly with professors has helped me a lot, and I'm glad that they've been super understanding."

MacKenzie Ridley

In a moderated panel discussion at the 2021 UAAC Conference, the Peers further reflected on their experiences as students over the course of the pandemic. They also shared recommendations for virtual interactions with students that could be implemented even as the world transitions to increased in-person interactions. Audience members praised Sage, Erica, and MacKenzie for their vulnerability, candor, and suggestions. One attendee noted the value of the Peers' insights, saying "I was surprised to hear of the benefits to and even preference for online coursework, [...] so thank you and your impressive student Peer Advisors!"

Highlights

As noted above, one of the highlights for the Peer Program in 2020 included a UROP research project completed by Erica Lampers and MacKenzie Ridley. They explored the student experience of virtual orientation, examining how turning on a webcam in virtual AAC Major Exploration sessions impacted a student's sense of belonging to the U. Erica and MacKenzie participated in 34 of these virtual sessions, sharing their research results at the virtual annual UROP Symposium.

Other highlights of the 2020-2021 fiscal year include the following:

In collaboration with the Major Exploration Program (MEP), the Peers underwent a six-week MEP training in Spring 2021. Phase I of these trainings covered major exploration topics—relevant student development theories, phases of exploration, and case study examples—for the Peers to utilize in the Summer 2021 orientation season. Phase II of MEP trainings will commence in fall 2021, allowing for reflection on orientation advising and preparation for Mandatory Advising season.

In February 2021, Peer Program Director Allie McClaskey attended a virtual session of the NACADA Assessment Institute. With input from the Peers, she developed inaugural mission and vision statements for the Peer Program.

In Spring 2021, the also-inaugural Peer Advising web page was added to the AAC website, providing visibility for the Peers and increasing their accessibility to students. The Peer Program mission and vision statements are on this page. In Summer 2021, the Peers began piloting a Peer-specific appointment type: Peer Advising. Designed to target new or prospective students to the U as well as current undergraduates, a Peer Advising appointment facilitates connection and mentoring between the Peer and the student. Topics covered in these appointments could include ways to increase campus involvement, fun things to do in Salt Lake City, or discussion of shared experiences and interests.



The Peer Advising Team:

Top row: MacKenzie Ridley, Allie McClaskey
Bottom row: Sage Blackburn, Jinx the Cat, Erica Lampers

Highlight: Changes to Utah Global

In July of 2019, the Academic Advising Center began a new collaboration with our Shorelight partner, Utah Global. Madeline Rencher (Orientation and Outreach) and Jake McPartlin (Academic Standards) each devoted 25% of their time to provided academic advising and related programming to pre-major Utah Global students. The relationship was an immediate success; in the first year they provided over 456 advising appointments to Utah Global students and contributed to the development of multiple online modules supporting student success.

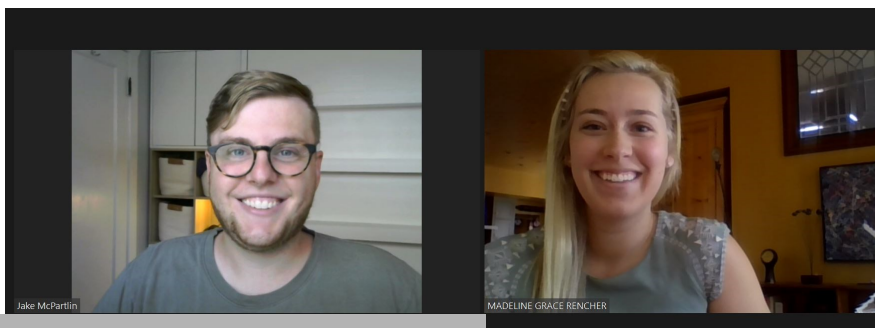
Utah Global has experienced tremendous growth over a relatively short timeframe. Although the number of students physically on campus in the last year was smaller than the previous year, the complexity of advising exploded with the addition of virtual options such as "AC-Live". As always, Madeline and Jake responded to ensure smooth delivery of services to students.

More moving pieces, fewer support staff from Shorelight, and a large projected incoming class precipitated the need for change. In late May, AAC was approved for a new Advising Coordinator position dedicated to supporting Utah Global students. Part of the position will be to provide advising to pre-major Utah Global students; the position will also be responsible for making sure the campus advising community is kept informed about changes to Utah Global and thus ensuring participants a smooth transition to degree seeking status.

We are indebted to Jake and Madeline for their outstanding work in establishing the advising relationship with Utah Global. They are currently serving on the Search Committee for the new coordinator, and have generously agreed to help on board our new team member.

Their specific responses included:

- Offered new morning advising times to accommodate international students with timezone conflicts
- Helped facilitate new program with fully online classes through Shorelight
- Helped transition UMass Boston students to U of U
- Created formalized GPA tracking process using Civitas
- Weekly reporting and outreach to encourage students to be proactive
- Gave a UAAC presentation in October 2020
- Navigated the Academic Director's departure and provided support to Interim Academic Director



Jake McPartlin and Madeline Rencher



IV. Campus-wide Advising Team

PreProfessional Advising | Advisor Education and Professional Development |

Highlight: UAAC | Bridge Advising Program | Academic Standards |

Highlight: General Education Exceptions Committee

Highlights 2020-21

The Campus-Wide Advising Team has undergone more change in the last year than anyone anticipated. Our staff changes have posed a challenge to us all in terms of time taken from advising students and coordinating our programming, but we have added several amazing professionals to our group that we are already learning from and whose fresh perspective and expertise is benefiting our students.

Academic Standards said farewell to Jason Atherton this year who stayed with AAC to become our Director of Mandatory Advising. His continuing presence has been invaluable as an occasional consultant as we welcomed Anna Bouska as our new Director of Academic Standards. Anna's experience in the College of Engineering and her ELP educational experiences are assisting her in quickly getting up to speed and asking the right questions. Jake McPartlin and Heather Crum have assumed a greater role in the processes and procedures of Academic Standards than they normally have done and are contributing to the collective improvement of the program by noticing the myriad details that would otherwise be lost in a typical day's workflow.

Preprofessional Advising witnessed the departure of Joe Witzke and later, Mayumi Kasai for other opportunities. Shelley Nicholson initiated a search for Joe's replacement and hired Alessandra Holt, who

The Campus-Wide Advising Team has undergone more change in the last year than anyone anticipated.

is a fantastic front-line advisor. Mayumi left her position as Director after serving admirably since 2014 and Shelley Nicholson was selected to lead PPA as the new Director. Shelley's selection necessitated yet another search for a Preprofessional Advising Coordinator to take charge of both the annual premed conference and the supervision and development of Alessandra Holt. In addition, Shelley is superintending the expansion of PPA cross-training to include the Transfer Team in the advising of new PPA students.

Finally, Advisor Education and Development's long-standing vacancy was filled late this year with an exception to the university's hiring freeze. Tricia Cook, a former Bridge Advisor with CSBS, joined the team as Assistant Director of Advisor Education and Development and promises to help Steve Hadley implement a new 12 month rotation of training topics for advisors campus-wide based on best practices shared at this year's NACADA Administrator's Institute. We are excited to welcome Tricia back to AAC!

PreProfessional Advising (Health & Law)

The PreProfessional Advising (PPA) team continued to be faced with many changes, trials, and successes during the Academic Year of 2020-2021. During this time, we both gained and lost team members, as Joseph Witzke and Mayumi Kasai left, and we welcomed our newest advisor, Alessandra Holt. In spite of the challenges, the PPA team still held 2512 individual appointments and provided group presentations to 1,690 students during this past year. One of our greatest strengths as a PPA team is adaptability, and this past 15 months have proved this again and again. We were faced with challenges, worked together as a team to come up with viable solutions, and the end result has been continued success in meeting the needs of students.

How We Responded to COVID (Putting Values into Action)

The pandemic allowed PPA to think differently. After recently transitioning from two office relocations in 2019-20, our team was well prepared to adapt ourselves to meet the needs of students during COVID. This past year has been trying for everybody, and our preprofessional students are no different. They were and are still facing difficult challenges to the application process for law and health professions schools. Standardized tests and extracurricular activities were cancelled, academic policies changed several times, and it remains a very uncertain time for our students. However, PPA stayed true to one of our core values of putting students first, and we did so through our adaptability.

Our transition from in-person to video appointments was near seamless, and has been very successful. The pandemic also allowed us to rethink such events as our application workshops, bimonthly PreMed Information Sessions, and our annual PreMed/PrePA Conference. Our workshops and info sessions have been virtual since the start of the pandemic, and we have continued to see

a record number of participants. Our fully virtual conference's theme was *Inclusivity in Healthcare*, and was a great success. The student-run committee planned and executed this conference entirely online, and we were able to host over 100 students.

Although the pandemic has waned and students are not facing the exact challenges as 2020, the pandemic will affect our students for the foreseeable future. We have decided to continue to have our COVID-19 FAQ website to serve as a resource for students. With video appointments, virtual workshops, and PreMed Info Sessions being such a success, we will continue to offer these options to meet the needs and desires of our students even when we go back to our physical on-campus spaces.

2,512

Appointments

By the PPA Team in **2020-21**

Instruction—Why It’s Important (and how we know it is impactful)

In addition to one-on-one appointments, one of the principal ways we connect to students is through instruction of our UGS classes. The recent staffing changes, although challenging, did not affect our ability to offer our full spectrum of UGS course offerings. We successfully continue to offer three sections of UGS 1020: Intro to PreMed/PrePA, as well as one section each of UGS 1030: Intro to PreDental and UGS 1021: Applying to Medical School. The spring offering of UGS 1020 had an unexpected instructor, John Nilsson, who stepped in to teach when the need arose. As a still relatively new class, UGS 1021: Applying to Medical School had its largest enrollment yet, at 19 students.

“This class has been amazing. I feel super prepared and ahead of the game.”

Feedback from
Student in UGS 1021

What We Learned

Throughout this unimaginably difficult pandemic year, PPA continues to meet the unique needs of our students by identifying and providing services students can utilize to overcome their challenges. We reinforced that having a variety of ways for students to utilize the resources PPA provides is the right thing to do. Our office is not a one-size-fits-all, and neither is the advising we provide. Each student has their own story, and we have worked hard to accommodate their needs and promote their success.

Table 1: PPA Annual Student Contacts

Academic Year	PreProfessional Health & Law				
	Individual Appointments		Group Presentations	Quick Helps	PPA Total Interactions
	HLTH	LAW	Total	Total	
2018-19	2,151	252	1,321	10,532	14,256
2019-20	1,972	247	1,674	8,416	12,309
2020-21	1,622	245	1,690	5,905	7,595



Top L to R: Amy Urbanek, Shelley Nicholson Allie McClaskey
Middle L to R: Ruby Pfeiffer, Terese Pratt, Alessandra Holt
Bottom L to R: John Nilsson, Heather Crum

Advisor Education and Professional Development

AAC Role in Campus-Wide Advisor Education and Professional Development

The role of AAC in campus-wide advisor education and professional development is twofold.

- First, AAC plays a role in the onboarding of new advisors regardless of the department in which they are hired.
- Second, AAC provides ongoing professional development opportunities for all advisors.

AAC has developed a Canvas course that provides online training modules and resources for new advisors. New advisors are required to complete a training module on the proper use of Advisor Notes before they get authorization to access certain panels in PeopleSoft. There are also ten training modules teaching new advisors how to use various panels in PeopleSoft. Additionally, there are various resources for things such as the structure of advising and the University of Utah, Degree Audits and Exceptions, the registration system and

Schedule Builder, the Mandatory Advising Program (MAP), and recordings of various in-services.

AAC provides current advisors opportunities for education and professional development through a campus-wide in-service program. In-services educate advisors on relevant information needed to perform their responsibilities as advisors. These topics include things such as changes to prior learning credit (AP, IB, Con-Current Enrollment, etc.), an updated framework for General Education, and changes in math and writing placement. In-Services also provide opportunities for professional development with topics such as facilitating difficult conversations with students, strategies for advising in a virtual environment, and creating connected, coordinated, and comprehensive High-Impact Advising. Current advisors also have access to the resources in the Canvas course as well as an Advising Handbook Wiki.

Unique Responses to COVID-19

Advisor Education and Professional Development has responded to the unique circumstances relating to COVID-19 by increasing opportunities for virtual education and development. In-services are held virtually on Zoom. This has allowed more advisors to attend as time constraints related to travel are eliminated. Virtual in-services has also provided the opportunity to host presenters that are not located virtually. Dr. Dallin Young was able to share and discuss research on High-Impact Advising while residing in South Carolina.

Gaining access to needed tools such as PeopleSoft has also been streamlined. The needed training can be completed online. Security Authorization Forms can be signed and sent electronically with the use of Adobe software.

The Advisor Education and Professional Development program also developed a new Onboarding Guidebook for new advisors. Outlines and Learning Outcomes were developed for each training topic. These were then compiled into a comprehensive guidebook that serves as a resource, guide, and checklist in the onboarding process.

What is next as the program becomes fully staffed

The Advisor Education and Professional Development program has been operating without an assistant advising coordinator for the past 21 months. Beginning July 6, 2021 the program will be fully staffed once again as Tricia Cook will join the team. With the addition of a staff member the program will be able to complete tasks

previously put on hold and develop additional training programs. First, Steve Hadley will be able to resume focus on developing online training modules. This will enhance the onboarding process for both AAC advisors and campus-wide advisors. Second, we will develop and implement a new monthly workshop series. The

workshop series will consist of 10-12 workshops that are repeated on an annual basis. Topics will cover various advising theories. The book *Academic Advising Approaches: Strategies That Teach Students to Make the Most of College* will serve as the foundational basis for the trainings. Workshops will be open to new and continuing advisors.

Highlight: UAAC

MISSION

As educators and problem solvers, we advocate for students as they navigate their personal journey of higher education and attain their academic goals. Through inclusion and connection, we open doors to new opportunities for self-awareness and growth, empowering students to define their roles as citizens within local and global communities.

VISION

By promoting the UAAC mission to the University of Utah community we will advocate for the profession of academic advising. We will become a stronger advising community through the collaboration of advising units, encouragement of advisor well-being, and inclusive ongoing professional development opportunities.

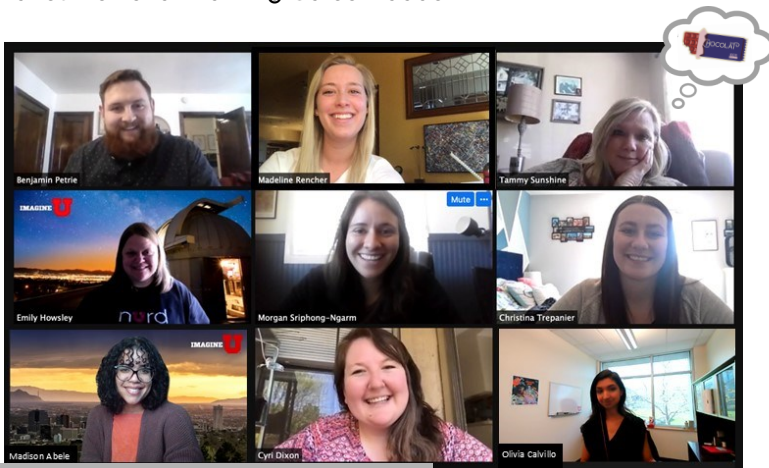
The University Academic Advising Community, or UAAC, is an organization unique to the University of Utah. As an essentially distributed advising institution, where advising embedded in the degree granting colleges is administered at the college level, a student's advising experience can vary substantially as they move from one unit to another. Adopting a "C2D2" (centrally coordinated, distributed delivery) system for programs such as Milestone Advising and Academic Standards promote consistency across campus; UAAC also contributes substantially to how advising is experienced by students.

UAAC promotes effective advising on campus in three main ways. First, the monthly meetings provide a sense of community (even in a virtual world), an opportunity to connect with one another, and to recognize advising excellence. Secondly, the professional development offered through in-services and the annual conference enable advisors to share best-practices and continually learn from one another. Finally, involvement in the UAAC Committees promotes advisor advocacy and development of leadership skills.

One of the challenges faced by UAAC is identifying members willing to take on leadership positions. We have had considerable turnover with the Executive Committee, including the co-chairs. This prevents us from fully leveraging the impact of this unique entity.

Some of the Notable Achievements of the Last Year

- Annual Conference – 130 attendees, 9 sessions, and a Keynote Address on advisor wellness by Dr. Lauren Weitzman, Director of the UofU Counseling Center
- UAAC Co-chairs attended virtual NACADA Administrator's Institute
- Work of the Assessment and Advisor Promotion Committees set the foundation for discussion of an Advising Career Ladder



UAAC Conference Committee 2021



Bridge Advising Program

Challenges due to COVID

COVID presented challenges to our Bridge program in terms of an unusually high amount of advisor turnover on campus due to staff adapting to changing circumstances. We said goodbye to Eli Covarrubias in Social Work, Jacklyn Chiu in Health, Tricia Cook in Social and Behavioral Science, Karla Motta in Education, and Jennifer Sweatman in Business. AAC engaged colleges in conversations about replacing these advisors quickly yet discovered that there was not sufficient bandwidth to cover their replacement in the short term.

How We Adapted

We developed the innovative advisor category of “communication liaison” which kept regular communication channels open between the colleges and AAC in the long-term while allowing colleges to not have to devote the time to our intensive bridge advisor training and AAC responsibilities in the short-term. It is likely that AAC can offer the communication liaison option in the future to colleges that have traditionally been reluctant to devote advising resources to maintaining a connection to AAC. The social and less-tangible elements of our training and mentoring practice have weathered the COVID storm rather well as in line with the AAC value of inclusivity we

were able to maintain vibrant mentoring relationships between newer and more seasoned bridge advisors. We welcomed Angelica Dennis and Maddi Olson as new bridge advisors from CSBS, Ali Johnson and Daniel Paul from Business, and Jerry Brockman from Social Work and look forward to working with them to help students be successful. The close communication between bridge advisors and AAC Core advisors has been of heightened importance as we all seek to adapt our advising practices to better serve students in a virtual environment and as we transition to having a greater physical presence on campus.

What We Learned

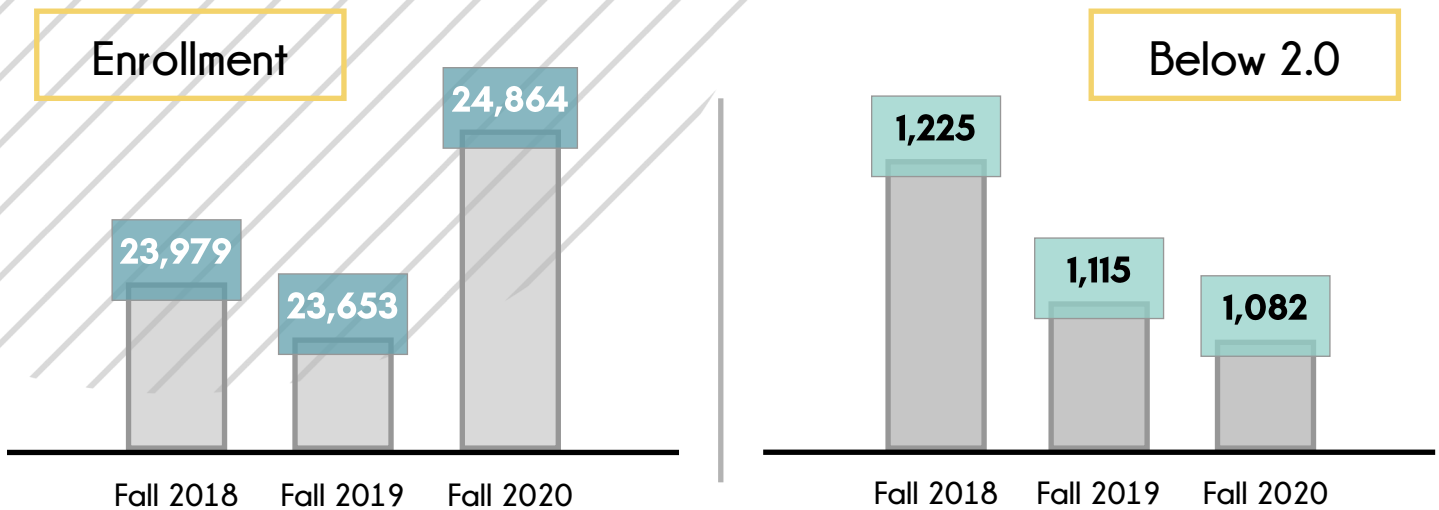
Academic colleges value their connection to Academic Advising Center. CSBS transitioned back to bridge advising after a semester of utilizing the “communication liaison” option. In addition, the Eccles School of Business chose to increase their bridge advising complement from 1 to 2, benefiting both Eccles and AAC. We also learned that colleges increasingly see bridge advising as an ideal role for newer advisors to fast-track their integration into the campus advising community, which aligns with the AAC values of collaboration and advising excellence.

Academic Standards



The Academic Standards program monitors and advises over 1,200 undergraduate students through collaborative academic interventions that focus on addressing the needs of our students and campus community.

Data Chart 1: Impact of COVID on Student Success



In Data Chart 1, the frequency of students earning a GPA below 2.0 has decreased over the last three years. During that time, the university has placed an emphasis on the importance of academic advising and has improved on hiring and training practices for advisors.

Potential Long-term Impact



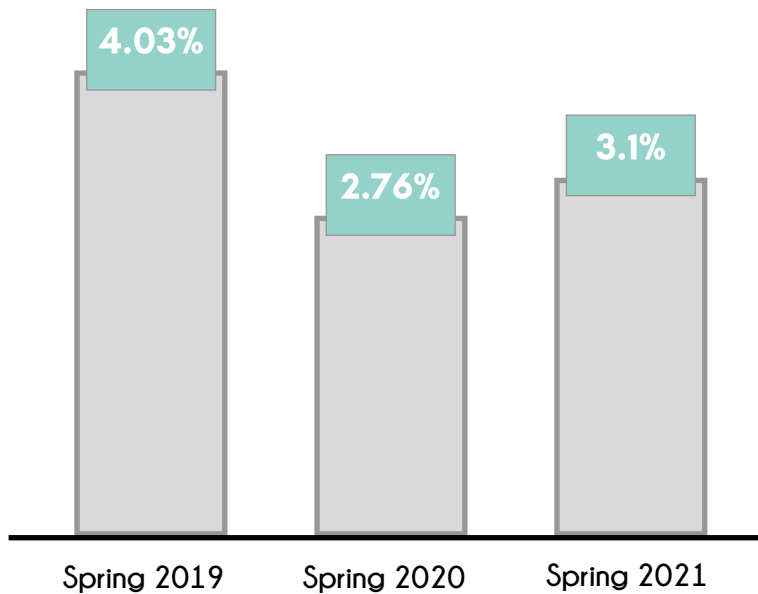
Excellence in Advising: Digital Training

The pandemic prompted the AS Team to develop 100% digital training. No longer will we be totally reliant on in-person training modalities nor paper-based training materials. AS information will be readily available to both AAC and UAAC advisors 24/7 for their own review, both in the form of PowerPoint presentations and recorded Zoom trainings.

A further advantage of digital training materials is the ability to control the information so that only the most accurate, up-to-date content is available to advisors, students, and campus partners. The campus conversations that ensue because of the increased visibility, accessibility, and usefulness of AS training materials will likely lead to further improvements in both the area of policies and procedures.

The AS team is committed to continuously assessing the effectiveness of this training in future years.

Data Chart 2: How Policy Changes Due to COVID-19 Impacted Students Below 2.0



Percentage Below 2.0

In Data Chart 2 we see the impact of liberalized policies around CR/NC selection put in place in 2020 and removed in 2021. The percentage of the student body below a 2.0 fluctuates accordingly.

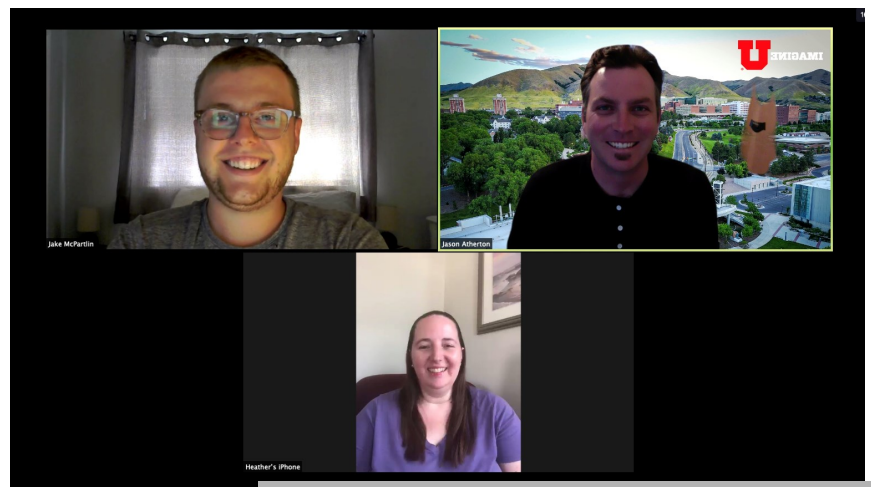


Inclusion: Part-Time Dean's List Policy Change

AAC has recognized the academic achievements of part-time students by successfully advocating for the creation of a new academic standing: Part-Time Dean's List. Beginning with the next academic year, students who are enrolled at the university less than 12 credit hours per semester who also achieve a 3.5 term GPA will be honored by being included on the new Part-Time Dean's List. Jason Atherton, the outgoing Director of Academic Standards, presented the proposal for the new academic standing to the Undergraduate Council, which approved the plan in Spring 2021. The incoming Director of Academic Standards, Anna Bouska, will be able to shepherd the first group of Part-Time Dean's List recipients to their recognition and superintend any adjustments to the implementation process.

Quote from a student to Jason Atherton:

"I just wanted to extend my thanks yet again for all your hard work to help me succeed in school. I know it was rough that first year or so but I have really turned things around and am doing very well in my upper level mathematics courses! You were very helpful in making this happen and you helped me every step along the way and I don't feel like I properly expressed my gratitude in person. Thank you for everything!"



Jake McPartlin, Jason Atherton, and Heather Crum

Highlight: General Education Exceptions Committee

AAC advisors (including bridge) explain the purpose and components of GE to new and continuing students in their advising appointments. The General Education Exceptions Committee considers requests by students to count transfer and U of U coursework towards their GE and Bachelor's degree requirements, and in addition to satisfying content criteria, mandates documentation of unique personal circumstances in the case of U of U courses being petitioned for credit. 278 courses were petitioned to the General Education Exceptions Committee from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Of the 278 that were submitted, 207 were approved. Both students and advisors benefit from the work of this committee—we help students graduate who have met the spirit of the General Education requirements but who have had exceptional educational circumstances.

The New Vision/Rubric

The university unveiled a new vision for General Education to entering students in 2020-21. Each General Education course, in addition to fulfilling the traditional requirements of laying the foundation for future success in math, writing, American institutions, or the traditional university disciplines, will also develop skills in one or more of the four Learning Outcomes: students will learn to collaborate effectively, reason & act ethically, respond creatively, and persist in addressing complex problems. In addition a Student Choice category of General Education courses was created which were designed to meet all four of the Learning Outcomes. Completion of a Student Choice GE course can substitute for any course deficiency in the Intellectual Exploration areas. This vision for General Education was presented to students in an online Orientation module.

Challenges and Responses

The current GE catalog has not been comprehensively analyzed nor each course assigned to the Learning Outcome it possesses. Because of this advisors experience difficulty in discussing the Learning Outcomes and in helping students to select courses for registration based on them. In addition, the implementation of the Student Choice option for students cannot currently be automated but will be instead left to individual advisors to assign to a GE area. AAC invited Ann Darling and Robyn Moreno to address a UAAC business meeting to present the Learning Outcomes to advisors. This led to greater understanding in the campus advising community of the new Learning Framework.

278
Gen Ed Courses
petitioned in
2020-21

207
Gen Ed Exceptions
approved in
2020-21

V. Epilogue

Looking Forward—Changes and Opportunities

The coming year brings new opportunities, but impending change often simultaneously creates excitement and anxiety. We are emerging from our remote working locations both changed ourselves, and stepping into a different landscape. COVID is only one of the influencers; leadership changes throughout the university provide us with the opportunity to self-reflect and examine both our priorities and our approaches.

We are deeply appreciative of the support and advocacy of academic advising we received from (former) President Ruth Watkins, Senior Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Martha Bradley, Senior Associate Dean and Director of Student Success and Empowerment Initiative Amy Bergerson, and Assistant Vice President Ann Darling. The programs they created and the professionals they nurtured will be their legacies.

Their work taught us the importance of continually asking what else we can do, or what we can do better, to support student success. Some of the areas in particular that we will need to examine in the coming year include:

- 1** **Advisor Equity.** Across campus, there is tremendous variability in terms of advisor caseload (number of majors, minors, and certificate programs), compensation, opportunity for advancement and expectations (administrative work, engagement in student recruitment). This affects student as well as advisor retention. The proposed career ladder will address some of these inequities, but more work on this front is needed.
- 2** **Support for UAAC.** The University Academic Advising Community provides professional development, but not all advisors are able to access the opportunities. Advisors in some academic units are actively discouraged from taking on leadership roles. UAAC reaches its maximum impact only when all advisors can fully participate.
- 3** **Technologies.** The university has invested in a number of technologies designed to improve the student experience and support success. In some cases, multiple academic units have independently acquired systems with comparable functionality (e.g., texting platforms, appointment management systems). A more coordinated approach to technologies combined with strategic hiring of implementation specialists would enable us to fully leverage the capabilities of these platforms, including CIVITAS.

The University of Utah is a highly complex organization. Advisors help student navigate the landscape; because of this we often see redundancies and inequities that affect the student experience. Wherever possible, advisors need to have a presence at tables (or zoom rooms) where decisions are being made. A well-trained, experienced, and coordinated team of advisors on campus is critically important to the sustainability of the institution.

VI. Appendices

Activities and Achievements of AAC Staff | Organizational Chart

The staff of the Academic Advising Center are leaders in their respective fields. Their collective contributions to the university and surrounding community demonstrate their commitment to excellence in and outside of the work environment. A comprehensive list follows, but a few achievements are deserving of special recognition:

- Shelley Nicholson—2021 NACADA Region 10 Excellence in Advising—Advisor Primary Role/Award Winner
- Madeline Rencher—2021 NACADA Outstanding Advising Awards—New Advisor/Award Winner
- Of the 39 advisors nominated for “Advisor of the Year”, five were AAC Core advisors, four were Bridge Advisors, one is a college liaison and two were previously affiliated with the AAC. Anna Bouska, our new Academic Standards Program Director received the award.
- Of the 21 advisors nominated for “New Advisor of the Year”, one was an AAC core advisor, four were Bridge Advisors, and one was previously affiliated with the AAC. Cyri Dixon, our Bridge Advisor for Physics received the award

Highlights: Putting Values into Action



Collaboration

AAC team members contributed to a total of 25 non-AAC based campus committees.



Professional Growth

AAC team members represented the U of U, presenting at state, regional, and national advising conferences.



Excellence in Advising

AAC advisors were recognized for their outstanding work at the university, state, regional, and national levels.

Appendix A:

Activities/Achievements of AAC Staff

Our staff demonstrate their commitment to excellence in advising and associated activities on and beyond campus. The staff is encouraged to participate and present at national and regional conferences and to seek opportunities that demonstrate the merit of their work. All academic advisors are members of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and Utah Advising Association (UAA). Listed below are some of the activities pursued by AAC staff members outside of their traditional advising and office responsibilities.

Membership in Professional Organizations	Committees/Activities—Off Campus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP) Utah Advising Association (UAA) Western Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (WAAHP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APLU Powered by Publics Working Group on Advising, Beth Howard (BH) NACADA Liberal Arts Advising Community – Chair, Ashley Glenn (AG) NACADA Region 10 Mentorship Program, (AG), Madeline Rencher (MR), Julia Vincent (JV), Lisa Hutton (LH) NACADA Region 10 Podcast Co-Host, (LH) Utah Advising Association Governing Board Member, Steph Begaye (SB) Utah State Career Studio Podcast—Special Guest/Interviewee, (MR) Utah Transfer Articulation Committee, Terese Pratt (TP) and Allie McClaskey (AM)

Committees/Activities—On Campus (excludes committees within AAC)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Senate Ex-Officio, (LH) Admissions Campus Recruitment Committee, (AG and MR) Beacons of Excellence Awards co-chair, (BH) Behavioral Intervention Team, (BH) EDI Faculty & Staff Affinity Groups, (SB) Gender Justice Scholars Program Advising, (AM, Heather Crum (HC), SB, MR, and Jake McPartlin (JM)) Integrated Student Team, (BH) Maria Reyes Transfer Scholarship Committee, (TP) Crimson Transfer Honor Society Scholarship Committee, (TP) Privilege, Whiteness & Critical Praxis, (UGS course, summer 2020, BH) Student Affairs Appellate Committee, (BH and John Nilsson (JN)) UAAC Advisor Advocacy and Promotion Committee, (Tammy Mabey (TM) and LH) UAAC Advisor Awards Committee Co-Chairs, (AG and SB) UAAC Conference Co-Chairs, (MR and TM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UAAC Assessment Committee, Marshal Beach (MB) UAAC Co-Chair, (MR) UAAC Mentor Program: Mentors, (AG, SBN); Mentee (MR) UGS Book Club, (BH) UGS Major Search Tool Working Group, (LH) Undergraduate Council Ad Hoc Committee for the Review of Health, Society, and Policy, (JV) University Academic Advising Community (UAAC) Executive Committee University Advisory Council on Teacher Education (UACTE) Secretary, Sara Hatch (SH) University Geographical Information Systems Committee, (BH) UROP Mentoring, (BH and AM) UROP: Value of Screen Presence in Developing a Sense of Belonging, Erica Lampers (EL) and MacKenzie Ridley (MacR) Utah Global Leadership Team, (BH)

Presentations—Invited/Selected

- “Helping Skills for Nonprofessional Counselors”, NACADA Undecided and Exploratory Student Interest Group Micropresentation, March 16, 2021, Marshal Beach
- “Leading Advising Teams in the Next Normal”, CIVITAS Leadership Summit Roundtable, June 19, 2020, Beth Howard
- “Modeling Care for Students: Creating a Culture of People Before Process” UAA Annual Conference, May 6, 2021, Julia Vincent
- “Orientation as a Port for Possibility: Learning From the Liberal Arts”, 2021 NACADA Annual Conference, Ashley Glenn
- “Return to Campus: Keys to Students Success”; University Marketing and Communications webinar August 13, 2020, Beth Howard
- “Taking a lesson from our friends in medicine: Using the SPIKES protocol to deliver bad news in Academic Advising”, Utah State University Advising Center, December 8, 2020, Julia Vincent
- “The Major Declaration Mindset: Using Planned Happenstance Theory to Reframe Conversations”, NACADA Region 8/9 Virtual, March 23, 2021, Lisa Hutton
- “There’s an App for That: Tech-Savvy Tips for Utilizing Social Media within Advising” 2021 UAA Conference, Madeline Rencher
- “There’s an App for That: Tech-Savvy Tips for Utilizing Social Media within Advising” 2021 Region 10 Conference Virtual, Madeline Rencher
- “What I Learned as a Student ... Applied to Advising”, NACADA Liberal Arts February 2021 Webinar, Ashley Glenn

Presentations—On Campus

- 4 Ways to Frame Your First Year around Major Exploration—Prospective Student Presentation, Ashley Glenn
- 4 Ways to Begin Exploring Majors Now—Prospective Student Presentation, Ashley Glenn
- 5 Myths about Majors—Prospective Student Presentation, Madeline Rencher
- “3,843 First Dates: Keeping the Magic Alive during First-Year Advising”, 2021 UAAC Conference, Ashley Glenn and Madeline Rencher
- “3am Mountain Time or 3am my time?: How to Meet Students Where They’re At during a Worldwide Pandemic”, 2021 UAAC Conference, Jake McPartlin and Madeline Rencher
- AAC: Home for Exploring Students—Training Presentation for Admissions, Ashley Glenn
- “Academic Advising: the Secret to a Successful Transfer” — Transfer Workshop Series, Terese Pratt
- “Exploring the Numbers—Student Data That Calls for Major Exploration Across Campus,” Campus-Wide Advisor In-Service, Major Exploration Program team
- “How to Explore and Decide on a Major, Minor, and/or Certificate”—Transfer Workshop Series, Lisa Hutton
- “Peer Into Our Year: Peer Advisors Discuss Online Learning in 2020”, 2021 UAAC Conference; Sage Blackburn, Erica Lampers, Allie McClaskey, and MacKenzie Ridley
- PreMed Information Sessions
- Red White and U—Transfer Presentation, Terese Pratt and Allie McClaskey
- “See Yourself at the U” Transfer Presentation at Swoop to the U, Terese Pratt and Allie McClaskey
- SSA Summer Bridge Student Event—Major Exploration Presentation, Lisa Hutton
- “There’s an App for That: Tech-Savvy Tips for Utilizing Social Media within Advising” 2021 UAA Conference, Madeline Rencher
- Utah International Charter School—Major Exploration Presentation, Lisa Hutton
- “Value of Screen Presence in Developing a Sense of Belonging”, 2020 Office of Undergraduate Research Summer Symposium, Erica Lampers and MacKenzie Ridley
- “What I Learned as a Student ... Applied to Advising”, 2021 UAAC Conference, Ashley Glenn, Cyri Dixon, Jason Atherton, Madeline Rencher, Shelley Nicholson, Terese Pratt
- What to Know about Major Exploration—Prospective Student Presentation, Madeline Rencher

Conference Attendance/Professional Development/Off-Campus

- “Adapting Career and Major Exploration Courses During COVID-19”, NACADA Webinar
- Appreciative Conversations: Utilizing Appreciative Administration Skills in Supervision and Staff Interactions Webinar
- LSAT Test Preparation—Sage Blackburn (SaB)
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Certification
- NACADA Administrator’s Institute
- NACADA Assessment Institute
- NACADA PreConference Workshop: Designing an Intentional & Equitable Hiring Process
- NACADA Region 8/9 Virtual Conference
- NACADA Region 10 Virtual Conference
- NACADA Ten Talk: Critical Race Theory
- NACADA Virtual Annual Conference
- Utah Advising Association Annual Conference
- Western Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (WAAHP)

Courses Facilitated by Academic Advising Center Staff at U of U

- UGS 1020: Intro to PreMed/PrePA
- UGS 1021: Applying to Medical School
- UGS 1030: Intro to PreDental
- UGS 1050: Major Exploration
- UGS 1550: Major and Career Exploration

Publications

- donahoe-rankin, erin, & Glenn, Ashley. (2021). Conversations: career advising for lgbtqa+ students in non-linear career paths. In Craig M. McGill and Jennifer E. Joslin (Eds.), *Advising Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer College Students*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Conferences Attendance/Professional Development/On-Campus

- “Active Learning for Online Classes”, CTLE Workshop
- Anti-Racism or Afraid of Racism?—with guest speaker Shametrice Davis, PhD
- CTLE Summer 2020 Boot Camp
- “Developing a Teaching Philosophy”, CTLE Workshop
- “Managing Cognitive Load: Tips for Designing Your Online Course”, CTLE Workshop
- TESOL Non-Credit Certificate—In progress, (AM)
- UAAC Annual Conference
- University of Utah Lifelong Learning: Introduction to Podcasting
- Wellness Beyond Whiteness panel

Other Activities of Note

- Asynchronous UGS 1050 created for Spring 2021
- Transfer Program collaboration with the Aspen Institute—Transfer Program recognized in [Inside Higher Ed](#) (NACADA article, “Vocational Degree to Bachelors” cited (TB)

Staff Completing Degrees

- Jason Lyons, Master’s Degree—Public Policy

2020-21 UAAC Advisor of the Month

- Eli Covarrubias—September
- Lisa Hutton—January
- Angie Gardiner—April

Staff Pursuing Degrees

- Erica Lampers (B.S. in Communication—Science, Health, Environment, & Risk)
- MacKenzie Ridley (B.S. in Health, Society, & Policy; Minor in Spanish; Honors Certificate; Pre-Physician Assistant)
- Mayumi Kasai, Doctorate Degree— Educational Leadership and Policy
- Ruby Pfeiffer, Master’s Degree—Global Education
- Sage Blackburn (B.S. in Political Science; Certificate in Criminology & Corrections)

Awards Received in 2020-21

- 2020-2021 UAAC Outstanding New Academic Advisor of the Year (AAC nominees)
 - Cyri Dixon—Recipient
 - Ali Johnson—Nominee
 - Allie McClaskey—Nominee / Finalist
 - Emily Howsley—Nominee
 - Maddi Olsen—Nominee
 - Nichole Hutchins—Nominee
 - Tricia Cook—Nominee
- NACADA Region 10 Excellence in Advising Award, 2021
 - Shelley Nicholson—2021 NACADA Region 10 Excellence in Advising—Advisor Primary Role/Award Winner
- NACADA Outstanding Advising Awards, 2021
 - Madeline Rencher—New Advisor / Award Winner
- 2020-2021 UAAC Outstanding Experienced Academic Advisor of the Year (AAC Nominees)
 - Anna Bouska—Recipient
 - Angie Gardiner—Nominee
 - April Vrtis-Curran—Nominee
 - Ashley Glenn—Nominee
 - Brenda Wicks—Nominee
 - Eli Covarrubias—Nominee
 - Jennifer McLaurin—Nominee
 - Lisa Hutton—Nominee
 - Marshal Beach—Nominee/Finalist
 - Michelle Tuitupou—Nominee
 - Sara Hatch—Nominee
 - Shelley Nicholson—Nominee/Finalist
 - Stephanie Begaye—Nominee

Appendix B: AAC Organizational Chart—2020-21

