The Structure of Advising at the University of Utah

Last Updated: 8/2013#
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The University of Utah

The Big Picture

The University of Utah is a research university, the State of Utah's flagship institution, and a member of the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). The “U” is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. There are over 60 different academic departments offering, in total, over 100 different degrees. In 2011, the University of Utah joined the PAC-12 (formerly PAC-10).

Students

There are approximately 31,000 students attending the University of Utah, with 23,000 who are undergraduates. Students attending come from all 29 Utah counties, all 50 states, and over 100 foreign countries. 45% of students are women, 55% are men. About 2300 students live on campus. The majority of students commute to school from locations across the Salt Lake Valley, Davis County, and Utah County typically.

Advising at the University of Utah

The University of Utah has an “Advising as Teaching and Learning” philosophy and approach to advising. Academic advisors educate and serve students from three main areas. University College / The Transfer Center (the college that serves new, undecided, and transitioning students), academic departments, and support agencies. The University of Utah utilizes the talents of both staff advisors and faculty who have an advising role. All three areas have areas of specialization designed to best serve students with through detail in their specific area. However, this
specialization creates a greater need for communication with all areas of campus. This need is addressed through the University Academic Advising Committee (UAAC), through advisor development programming, university-wide committee participation, and through individual advisor liaisons with departments outside of their area.

**University College / The Transfer Center**

University College is the college for undeclared and pre-major students and we assist students with the new student transition. Additionally, University College works with students who have questions about general education requirements and bachelor’s degree requirements. University College advisors help students explore majors and select a major that is right for them. University College administers the University of Utah academic standards policy, called “Scholastic Standards” and advisors in University College work with students whose GPA falls below a 2.0. Also, University College offers pre-professional school planning for pre-medical, pre-dental, pre-osteopathic, pre-podiatry, pre-chiropractic, and pre-law students. The DARS and GPS programs are administered and maintained through University College, as well. The Transfer Center is another name for University College, designed to be identified by prospective and new transfer students as a place that can help them transition to the University of Utah.

All University College advisors are also Transfer Center advisors.
**Departmental Advisors**

Another location for academic advising is through departments, specific colleges, and programs. As students transition to the University of Utah, they are directed to “make contact” with the department that houses their major area of interest. Departmental advising consists of advising on the specifics of a major, the major declaration process (whether an open major or a restricted major, the process for declaring the major can vary), class selection and course sequencing, including sequencing of prerequisites, Graduation Planning advising using the GPS System, graduation advising, and program management responsibilities.

**Support agencies** serve students in according to their mandates. Support agencies include:

- TRiO/Student Support Services
- Center for Ethnic Student Affairs (CESA)
- Athletics
- Disability Student Services
- International Center advising
- And More…

![Diagram](image)
Advising Programs

**Required** – Students must participate in the following advising interactions:

Students at the University of Utah are required to participate in advising at key points in their academic career.

- **New Transfer Advising** – Required of all transfer students as a part of their orientation. Transfer students must meet with an academic advisor prior to their first semester of enrollment at the University of Utah. Students cannot register for classes until they meet with an academic advisor in the department of their intended major.

- **The Mandatory Advising Program (MAP)** – Required of all students. There are several points of MAP advising. Points of advising include:
  - **New Freshman Advising** – Occurs in the first semester of enrollment for all students admitted as freshmen. Dependent on the students’ situation, students may meet with University College advisors, advisors in the department of the student’s major, athletics advisors, CESA, or TRiO.
  - **Second Year Advising** – Students who have under 60 credits and at least two semesters at the University of Utah are required to meet with advisors in the department of their major.
  - **Undecided Advising** – Students who have completed 60 credits and at least two semesters at the University of Utah, but have not declared their major (or pre- / intermediate- status in restricted majors) are required to meet with their departmental advisor to declare. Students who are unsure of their major are required to meet with an advisor in University College advising to work on Major Exploration activities.

- **Graduation Application Advising** – The Graduation Office requires that all students planning to graduate must meet with their departmental advisor to evaluate their progress toward their degree and determine that they can reasonably complete their degree in the specified time.

- **Scholastic Standards Advising** - All students whose cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0 must go through scholastic standards advising through University College Advising.

**Advising-Related Holds**

Advising related holds are generated to ensure that students meet with advisors and complete their Mandatory Advising Program meetings. Holds exist for all Mandatory Freshman, Second Year, and Undeclared Advising Points. However, many holds placed on campus are unrelated to advising.

**Voluntary**

While there are key required advising points, students are encouraged to seek out advising whenever they believe they could benefit from it. Formal advising opportunities, including appointments, or in some offices, walk-in advising times, are available in advisor’s offices. Students who choose to utilize the Graduation Planning System are encouraged to meet with advisors to review their individual plans for graduation. Advisors can provide key information and considerations for students as they are planning their
Informal – or informational – advising opportunities exist as well, through special University of Utah events, such as the Major Exploration Expo and Plazafest. Students have the option of participating in advising in the following ways:

**Anytime** - Students are encouraged to meet with advisors whenever they have questions or issues.

**Graduation Planning System** - a program that is designed to help students create a long-term plan for their education, as well as a time frame for the completion of that plan.

### Student Success courses

A number of courses are offered to help students transition to the University of Utah and explore their options. Many of these courses are taught by academic advisors from across campus. They include:

- **UC 1050: Major Exploration** – a course designed to help students consider their unique personality, interests, skills, and values and connect these to possible major choices and degree options.

- **UC 1020 and UC 1030: Introduction to Premedical Preparation/and introduction to Predental Preparation** – a course designed to help students consider careers in medicine and dentistry and to educate them on the preparation necessary to become good candidates for these professional programs.

- **UC 1060: Introduction to Pre-Law Preparation** – a course designed to help students consider the preparation necessary to become good candidates for law schools.

- **Ed Psy 2600: Strategies for College Success** – designed to help students develop good study habits, test preparation, and time management skills beneficial for being successful in university courses. (This course is offered through the Counseling Center)

- In addition to these open courses, many colleges offer their own transition and preparation courses.
Advising Technology Tools

**PeopleSoft** - PeopleSoft is the official student record database at the University of Utah. It is managed by the Registrar’s Office and Academic Computing Services (ACS). When using this technology tool, advisors have the ability to view official student information, including test scores, grades, and advisor notes. It is essential for advisor management of the Mandatory Advising Program and the ASUU Graduation Guarantee program, as well as all points of advising contact with students.

- **Access** to PeopleSoft is granted through the Registrar’s Office (who needs approval from your department).

**DARS** – The Degree Audit Reporting System is an internet-based tool designed to allow students and advisors to see a progression toward any undergraduate degree at the University of Utah. Students are encouraged to learn how to generate their own DARS reports. Advisors also must know how to generate, read, and create exceptions in the DARS interface. Advisors must request access to DARS to generate reports on behalf of students and for creating DARS exceptions.

- **Access** is to DARS is granted through the Registrar’s Office.

**GPS** – The Graduation Planning System is a companion to DARS that allows students and advisors to create 4, 5, and 6 year graduation roadmaps, as well as customized plans for sequencing courses into a graduation timeline. (GPS is currently in the development stages.)
Support for Academic Advisors

Due to the specialized nature of delivery of advising at the University of Utah, a need for a communication network between all areas of campus exists. This need is addressed through the University Academic Advising Committee (UAAC), advisor development programming, university-wide committee participation, and individual advisor liaisons with departments outside of their area. Additionally, campus-wide education and development opportunities exist for people with the responsibility of providing academic advising to students (including staff advisors, faculty, and student support agencies).

**University Academic Advising Committee (UAAC)** - UAAC is an open organization of academic advisors who meet monthly to discuss numerous points of interest on campus. Standing reports come from the Admissions Office, the Financial Aid Office, the Registrar’s Office, Student Recruitment, and UAAC sub-committees. Advising and academic programs, as well as current policy and proposed changes are discussed. Advisors from all areas of campus are welcome to present departmental or programmatic information at UAAC. UAAC typically meets on the third Thursday of every month (with the exception of July).

**UAAC List-Serve** - All advisors and support professionals are eligible to receive UAAC meeting minutes and announcements through the UAAC list-serve. Advisors must request to be added to the list-serve. Email admin@uc.utah.edu and request to be added to the UAAC list-serve.

**Campus-Wide Advisor Development** - Trainings for new advisors are offered throughout the year. The trainings are designed to give advisors a breadth of exposure to the workings and office that intersect with advising at the University of Utah.

- **Advising Basics** - An introduction to the advising profession at the University of Utah. Includes information from departments that intersect with advising.

- **Advising Technology Training**
  - **DARS and GPS** - Use of the Degree Audit Report System, including entering degree requirement exceptions and creating, updating, and utilizing degree program information in the Graduation Planning System (GPS) projective planning tool.
  - **PeopleSoft for Advisors** - An advisor-specific introduction to the University of Utah’s academic record database. This program is designed for faculty and professional advisors who will be need to access and make changes to academic records when advising students. Includes explanation of procedures required in PeopleSoft during required advising points, including The Mandatory Advising Program Points (Freshman Advising, 2nd Year Advising, Undeclared Student Advising, Graduation Advising) and Graduation Guarantee Advising programs.

**Special Advisor Education and Development events** - Occur throughout the year to support the ongoing development of continuing advisors.

- **The University of Utah Advising Conference** - The conference commences education and development programming for the academic year. It provides a forum to discuss University of Utah programs, policy, best practices, and advising theory and models, as well as serves as a networking and connection opportunity for advisors and student affairs professionals working across campus.
• **UAAC Roundtables and Workshops** - Workshops are topic-specific one-time events, usually running 1 – 1 ½ hours in length. The topics are focused on issues important to advising students at the University of Utah. Topics are scheduled to be timely in consideration of the academic year cycle. Topics include: technology, transfer student issues, developmental advising, programming to serve special populations, and others.

• **UAAC Special Programs** – Presentations on advising programs designed to serve as updates or refreshers to existing knowledge.