

First-Year Experience Proposal

Our Charge:

To address the areas of the First-Year Experience as it relates to:

1. First-year Advising
2. Career Advising
3. Advising Center
4. Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction
5. GS 100
6. Transition to Upper-class advising
7. Keeping parents appropriately informed

Recommendation:

First, we recommend the creation of an Advising Center on campus that would report to Academic Affairs. This office would house a Director who would oversee six employees, including: First-year Advisors (3), Career Advisors (2), and one Dual Credit Advisor. Within this office would be the duties of coordinating GS 100, NSR, Orientation and Tutoring. The First-year advisors in this office would be the main points-of-contact for all First-year students including exploratory, probation and transfer students under 30 credit hours (note Dual Credit does not count towards this total). The office would also serve as the home to the Starfish Campus Administrator, as well as planning and executing the Part-time and Full-time job fairs, coordinating the intern programs and creating workshops around career development. They would also coordinate with Marketing to compose a Parent newsletter and manage a webpage for parents of current students.

Second, we recommend that the position of Recruitment and Retention Specialist (R&R) undergo a title change to College of Liberal Arts, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, College of Business and Natural Sciences Advising Specialist and remain within their respective colleges. They would act as the advisor for all Sophomore [defined as >30 hours of BH credit; note Dual Credit does not count towards this total], Exploratory, Transfer, Probation, and Suspend students. The Advising Specialists would also provide important training to the faculty in their college about registration, advising and other retention resources and tools. The Advising Specialists would also have some duties of the Registrar's office and be able to lift registration holds and override pre and co-reqs to move the registration process along. Additionally, they would serve as the main point of contact for Advising Center, and communicate with the advisors in that office any changes to programs and registration related issues.

Third, we recommend a more robust plan of communication across campus as it relates to advising through Starfish, with the goal of developing better record keeping, and improving our ability to make future advising assessments. This proactive approach to moving information forward, as well as keeping notes on student meetings, will result in better experiences for the campus community and improve student success.

Fourth, a combination of increased awareness, diagnoses, and need for mental health counseling in our current student population requires additional staffing of counseling professionals. Staffing levels at regional peer campuses are listed on the following page; these data suggest an increase of at least one full-time counseling position is needed.

Current staffing at Rapid City includes 1.75 advising positions, as well as student services support through a 0.25 position. The creation of the Advising Center will support advising needs at the Rapid City location by providing additional staffing one day a week through a First-year Advisor and Career Advisor visit.

This proposal has students who have completed >60 credit hours at BH shift to a Faculty Advisor for registration, course selection, program tracking and completion, as well as professional development. We strongly believe the Faculty Advising model requires support through training, coordinated efforts with the Advising Specialists and First Year Advisors, and improved communication among all groups. Students may continue to work with their professional advisors after their first or second year. Research and conversations with other institutions indicates students who have multiple advisors receive better support and persist at a higher rate.

Why:

We propose a hybrid model using existing R&R professional advising and faculty expertise to bridge students from first-year through graduation. An Advising Center can be the location where students in their first year and throughout their college experience can go to receive support and insight about academics through post-graduation success.

We also believe that having a dedicated advisor for Dual Credit students would allow us to build better relationships with the students enrolling in Dual Credit, and provide improved support to better address their unique issues and retain them into full-time enrollment at BH.

This proactive approach would help students make progress in both their educational and career goals. As Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) suggested, creating an Advising Center would also help in centering many of the retention efforts in one office to help with consistency and accountability. It would also help create opportunities for the current R&Rs to focus on the retention of students past their first-year and to train faculty to do that as well. Additional staff are necessary to support our retention efforts through First-year, Dual Credit and Career Advising by providing a ratio of staff to students allowing advisors to know their advisees, connect on a foundational level, and assist them on a path towards success. This would increase our retention from first-to-second year and help with overall retention and graduation rates.

According to the primary professional organization for college advising, universities similar in size to BHSU should aspire to an average of 233 students per advisor [<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advisor-Load.aspx>]. Universities with larger enrollments (>6000) have on average 333 students/advisor, and larger support infrastructures to accommodate student needs. Given the academic and financial profile of the students attending BHSU, as well as our student success centered mission, we need to follow established best practices.

Additional Research:

As part of our review we looked at similarly sized institutions in the region and assessed their Advising Centers based on their student population. The institutions we looked at have more robust and offices to support the First-year Experience, Academic Advising, Career Development and Student Health and Counseling.

See Table 1.0 for the other institutions as well as what BHSU currently looks like and our recommended changes.

The following represent BH projections using the above staffing model and our current retention values.

Admissions Goal for Fall 2020:

- First-time/Full-time students @600
- Transfers @300
- Dual Credit @600

First-year students Retention:

Term	1 st time undergrads	Retained the following Fall
2016FA	587	392
2017FA	555	323
2018FA	490	288

Transfer Retention:

Term	Transfers & Transfers-in-system	Retained the following Fall
2016FA	291	181
2017FA	290	177
2018FA	231	142

The following data relates to Exploratory, Probation, and Suspend students and students in these categories would under this model go to the current R&Rs in each college.

Exploratory studies numbers for each School:

School	2017FA	2018FA	2019FA
BBCH.EXP-AHM	25	18	19
BBCH.EXP-BSS	32	16	23
BBCH.EXP-BUS	17	25	16
BBCH.EXP-ED	10	9	8
BBCH.EXP-MNS	31	23	18
Grand Total	115	91	84

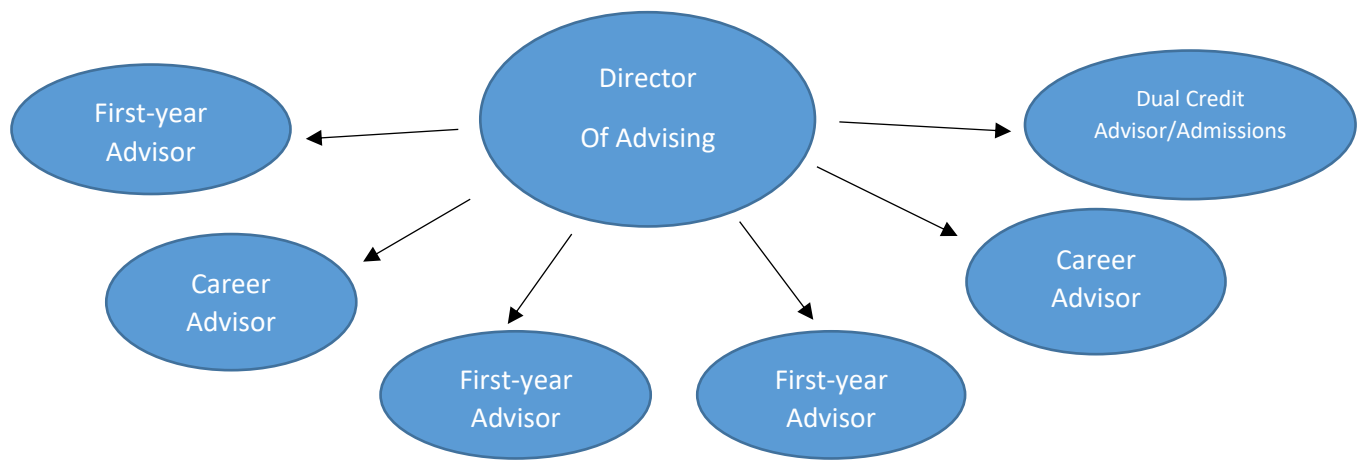
Probation and Suspend students (total of all credit hours):

Term	Academic Standing	# of Students
2016FA	Probation	215
2016FA	Suspension	71
2017FA	Probation	252
2017FA	Suspension	54
2018FA	Probation	171
2018FA	Suspension	39

First-year Students only:

Term	Academic Standing	# of Students
2016FA	Probation	147
2016FA	Suspension	36
2017FA	Probation	170
2017FA	Suspension	32
2018FA	Probation	124
2018FA	Suspension	23

First-year Experience & Career Development



Estimated #s for 2020/2021:

- 600 FY Students appx
- 600 Dual Credit Students appx
- $600 \times 2 = 1200 - 80 \text{ TRIO} = \mathbf{1120/4 = 280}$

Director of FYE Duties:

- Supervise Career Advisors, FY Advisors, Dual Credit Advisor
- Coordinate GS 100
- Teach GS 100 section(s)
- Advisees from GS 100 sections (25-50)
- Administer Starfish
- Coordination of NSR – with Admissions, Registrar, Faculty and Retention Advisors
- Coordination of Orientation – with Student Engagement
- Coordination of Student Mentors for First Year Experience (funded through FWS)
- Attend Preview Days
- Partner with Writing Center (WAC)/Math Center (MAC)
- Coordinate Tutoring across programs on-campus (funded through FWS)
- Manage a Parents of Current Students webpage and Parent newsletter.
- Evaluation of student services under purview (tutoring, advising, career services, GS 100)

FY Advisors Duties:

- Support First-Year students (defined as having completed fewer than 30 credits, excluding Dual Credit)
- Generalized advisors across majors
- 4 advisor model based on estimated incoming class:
 - o Responsibilities split among 3 FY and 1 Dual Credit
 - o First-Year students
 - o First-Year Exploratory students
 - o First-Year Probation students
 - o First-Year Transfer students (under 30 credits)
- Advisee meetings – mandatory meeting with each FY student in first 3 weeks of semester one.
- Respond and Follow-up with Starfish Flags
- Leave notes in Starfish about meetings with students

- Knowledge of Financial Aid on individual student level
- Assist with NSR & Orientation Days
- Register advisees for classes
- Lift advising holds
- Refer peer tutors as needed
- Staff the Rapid City location 1 day a week on a rotating basis
- Attend GS 100 sections as needed to present relevant materials

- **Dual Credit** specific duties:
 - o Manage recruiting of Dual Credit students
 - o Communicate with HS counselors/parents
 - o Liaise with Faculty
 - o Send on Mid-term deficiency notifications
 - o Advise incoming and current Dual Credit students about course section availability

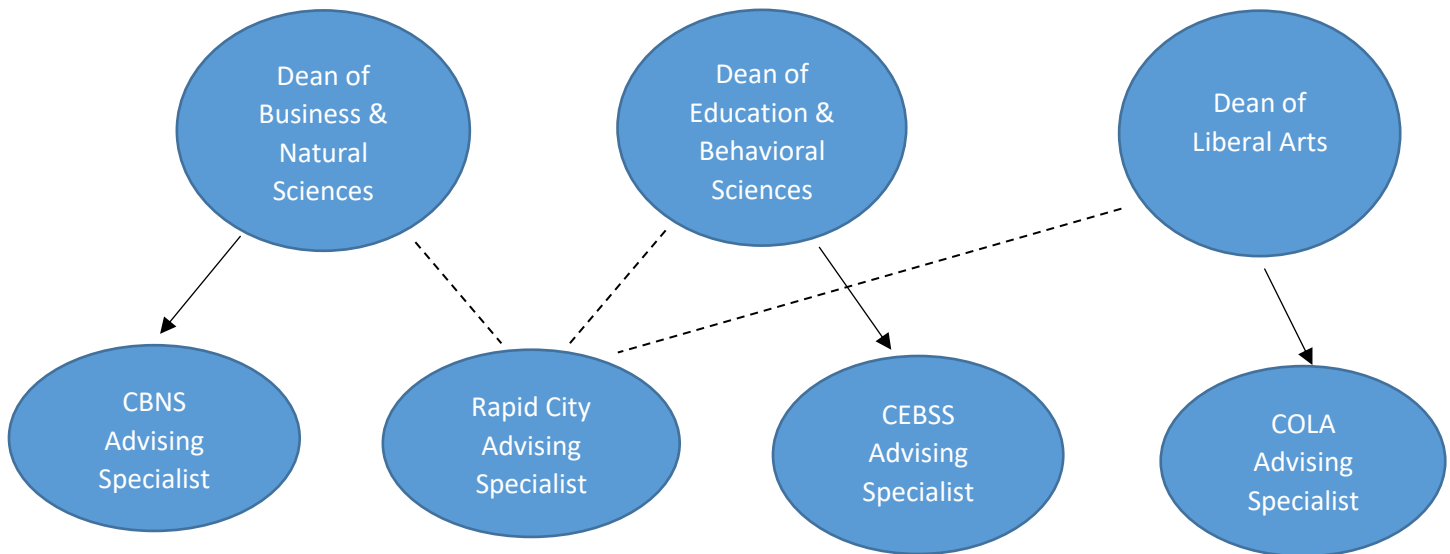
Career Advisors Duties:

- Career/Degree Coaching
- Add jobs to Jacket Jobs website and management of site
- Collaborate with College Advisors to assist students with job searches, grad school prep
- Plan & Execute Part-time job fair
- Plan and Execute Career Development Fair/ Event Planning
- Job shadow opportunities for First-Year Experience (FYE)
- Coordinate Intern Programs with companies and organizations with Director of Corporate Relations
- Coordinate Intern Programs with different Academic Programs on-campus
- Administer and Manage Outcome surveys
- Create Workshops for resume, cover letter, and mock interviews
- Attend Preview Days, NSR, Orientation
- Staff the Rapid City location 1 day a week on a rotating basis
- Attend GS 100 sections as needed to present relevant materials
- Coordinate Student Employment jobs on-campus (FWS, Institutional)

Notes:

- Department reports to Academic Affairs
- This department would be located in the renovated Library
- First-year to senior students may also have a TRIO advisor, American Indian Studies Advisor, Honors Advisor, Athletic coaches, etc.
- After their first-year, or completion of two consecutive semesters at BHSU, students will be transitioned to either an Advising Specialist in their college or a faculty advisor depending on their declared major, credit completion rate, and GPA.

Academic Advising within the Colleges



Advising Specialist (formerly termed R&R) Duties:

- Advising All Sophomore (defined as >30 hours of BH credit, excluding Dual Credit), Exploratory, and Transfer students
 - o Estimated Transfers for 2020 @300
 - o Back-up for Faculty Advisors – might have some Junior and Senior students
- Advisor for Probation and Suspend students
- Advisor for IREX and Exchange International Students, and monitors degree completion
- Provide training to Faculty on:
 - o Dual Credit students
 - o Transfer students and credits
 - o Registration tools and resources
 - o Campus Resources (Counseling/Health, TRIO, AIS, Disabilities Services, Career, etc.)
- Have option of operational duties assigned to the Registrar's Office, including:
 - o Overriding pre-reqs and co-reqs, releasing registration holds, simple class additions/alterations
- Advisee Meetings – mandatory in the first few weeks
- Respond and Follow-up with Starfish Flags
- Assist with NSR & Orientation Days
- Attend Preview Days
- Financial aid-FAFSA-Financial Literacy
- Graduation mapping
- Referring students to Tutoring/Counseling/Career Development/Student Engagement/Study Abroad
- Integrate Technology - Starfish Calendars, Advising videos, FAQ questions
- Register advisees for classes
- Track and collect exit data on non-returning students
- Coordinate Supplemental Instruction (SI) under each college
- Communicate any program, class, instructor changes to Director of Advising and FY Advisors
- Communicate with faculty and attend program meetings to get updates on College/School changes
- Work with faculty and school chairs to create 4-year plans related to various school programs

Semester Communication Plan including Starfish and Advising

- Weeks 1-3 students decide if they want to transfer or not
 - o 1st semester Freshman meet with FY Advisor in first 3 weeks, part of GS 100 curriculum
 - Option for group meeting (3-5 students), FY Advisor presents in GS 100?
 - o Mandatory meeting with advisor for Transfer students
 - o Probation student meetings
- Week 2 Post Census Starfish Survey - Follow up with flags, set up any meetings Weeks 3/4
- Week 4 Academic Check Starfish Survey - Follow up with flags, set up any meetings Weeks 5/6
- Week 6 Mandatory meeting for students on probation/suspension
- Week 8 Athletic Grade Check Starfish Survey - Follow up with flags, set up any meetings Weeks 9/10
- Week 9 Midterm DEFs - Follow up with flags, set up any meetings Weeks 9/10
- Week 10 Withdraw Starfish Survey - Follow up with flags, set up any meetings Weeks 10/11
- Week 10 Registration opens – registration mandatory meetings with advisees
- Week 11 last day to Withdraw
- Week 13 Athletic Grade Check Starfish Survey - Follow up with flags, set up any meetings Week 14
- Week 14 Thanksgiving Slump Happens – student check-in
- Week 15/16 last weeks
- FINALS

NOTES:

- Add Kudos during the school year (ex: Week 3, Midterms, before Finals)
- Use proactive communication strategies with all students.
- Use Starfish to track Advising as well as Career appointments for students.
- Create Career Development specific tracking items.

Outcomes:

We believe that a more proactive model of advising where First-Year students have a specific place to go that is designed to help them be successful in their first year will increase retention at BHSU. An improved ratio of staff to students will result in better connections, trust and persistence for our students from the first year to the second year. This model will also re-focus the current R&R role to be even more college specific and to provide much-needed support to groups of students that are historically under-served.

This model creates an Advising Center to support first-year students, but also to provide much-needed career development opportunities. By keeping careers tied to Academic Affairs there will be better communication of how career development can support academic success, and how academics can more directly contribute to preparing students for their future careers. Our goal is for all classes of students to actively participate – from freshman to senior year.

Better communication through Starfish as it relates to advising and careers will also provide better documentation and encourage BH to embrace a more holistic approach to advising where we help advise students to be successful in all areas of their college career and beyond.

An integral aspect of this staffing proposal is long-term institutional benefits based on increased student retention. The financial value of improved advising and staffing student success areas is retaining more students from freshman to sophomores, as well as through additional years until graduation. Our mission and university ethos is clear in supporting quality educational experiences, and high levels of student success. If we are successful with the Title III grant proposal, the \$500,000 over each of five consecutive years would be allocated to support these new positions. BHSU would be expected to cover the salaries for those positions after the grant is completed, and dedicating a portion of the retained student revenue towards these expenditures would be an appropriate, self-sustaining model.

Resources:

- RNL “Opportunity Analysis” Report
- South Dakota State University advising model
- Northern State University advising and tutoring model
- Montana State University advising, career, and college success model
- University of Nebraska academic advising and career development model
- NACADA National Advising Association Clearinghouse