UC Merced Academic Advising
Annual Assessment Report – 2017-2018
September 2018

Campus Academic Advising Assessment Workgroup

Executive Summary

In 2017-2018, the Campus Academic Advising Assessment Workgroup has continued efforts to develop campus-wide assessment of undergraduate advising through the alignment of advising services and evaluation of student learning. This report focuses on Goal 4 of the advising service goals: *Provide advising that is tailored to the distinctive needs of specific student populations.*

Data evaluated for the current implementation of a cross campus Academic Difficulty Intervention for students with an academic standing of 'subject to academic dismissal'(SD) demonstrated a positive relationship between student participation in the intervention and their GPA at the end of the term. This report outlines the process taken by the academic advising community to evaluate the standardization of the Academic Difficulty Intervention through a two academic year process.

In an effort to align support for students on SD status, the group continued using the previously created student learning outcomes and standard communications protocol, curriculum, and tools. A paired t-test was completed and found the spring GPAs were statistically more significant than the fall GPAs for all first-year students in the sample. An analysis was performed to see if there was any relationship with the students who met the GPA requirement to the identified strategies used while on academic difficulty. Of the students who met the GPA requirement at the end of term, for major themes arose as challenges students faced resulting in their SD status**: Physical** Health, Family situations, Transitions, Mental Health. A direct connection between challenges and resources was not identifiable at this time. The findings of this analysis also indicate a more consistent outcome for SD students regardless of their advising unit.

As a result of the intervention analysis, several recommendations are offered: 1) an evaluation of the appeal process to provide a consistent foundation which can be tailored to each unit's unique student population, 2) continued efforts to remove transcription procedures for data collection and ease the front facing student experience, and 3) categorize connections between students identified challenges and resources students utilized at the end of term.

I. Progress on Actions Stemming from Last Year's Assessment

In response to last year's assessment, the UC Merced Academic Advising Report, and through feedback from the *Working Group for Review of Administrative Assessment*, the Campus Advising Assessment Workgroup met monthly to move forward efforts related to collaborative advising assessment. An update on actions related to last year's results are:

In 2017-2018, campus academic advisors implemented a number of changes as a result of last year's assessment:

Academic Difficulty Interventions
- For 2017-2018, the group collected qualitative data, including students' reported reasons for difficulty and resources utilized, to evaluate potential correlations with quantitative data (e.g. major, GPA or academic standing). Data was collected in pre- and post- intervention surveys

- We will begin to investigate how end-of-term appeal decisions are made and how potential alignment of guidelines might improve the effectiveness of the SD intervention, while maintaining each unit's faculty requirements

Registration and Orientation Student Learning Outcomes

Given that all of the current resources were indicated to be helpful to students, we will continue to offer all of the resources for new student registration. The comments provided by students related to registration resources will be used to inform improvements to specific tools. Many of these resource improvements will be implemented for registration of the Spring 2018 cohort, while others will be updated for Fall 2018. Recommended improvements included:

- Strengthening language around the number of units a student should take per term to maintain progress to degree
- Clarifying which courses have multiple components and how to avoid registration errors
- Promoting use of online videos as a resource for registration, which may include expanding available video topics and providing guidance as to how these videos supplement advisor support

We will continue to assess the usefulness of the registration resources over the next year as well as in 2018-19, as indicated in our multi-year assessment plan. Doing so will allow us to continuously improve the resources available to students as well as provide baseline information necessary for the development of the Bobcat Advising Center (first year and undeclared advising).

II. Introduction / Background to this Year's Assessment

In 2017-2018, the Campus Academic Advising Assessment Workgroup has continued efforts to develop campus-wide assessment of undergraduate academic advising services, seeking to respond to data from last year's report and remain responsive to the changing needs of the campus and student body. This year, the group focused on alignment of services across the four units, including:

- Assessment of services to students in academic difficulty
- Data collection of academic advising student learning outcomes for new student registration and orientation. The data will be analyzed in 2018-2019

2017-2018 Campus Academic Advising Assessment Workgroup Membership:
- Armando Contreras, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA)
- Karla Gonzalez, School of Engineering (SoE)
- John Newton, School of Natural Sciences (NS)
- Erica Robbins, School of Natural Sciences (NS)
- Michelle Roppeau, Bobcat Advising Center (BAC)
- Co-facilitators: Alisha Kimble, Office of Undergraduate Education; Amy Moffat, Student and Program Assessment Manager, School of Natural Sciences; Stephan Bera, Assessment Manager, SSHA; Miriam Chavez, Student Success Coordinator, Office of Undergraduate Education

III. Service Goals

Academic Advising Service Goals

1. Promote appropriate progress to degree for undergraduate students

2

2. Provide students with advising resources and materials that are accurate, current, and understandable
3. Provide interactive advising in formats that meet student preferences and needs in timely and effective ways
4. Provide advising that is reflective of our diverse student populations and unique research environment
5. Facilitate student learning and self-advocacy in relation to reaching academic goals and career plans
6. Support implementation of faculty approved curriculum changes for courses and academic programs

These goals continue to serve as the framework for academic advising services and serve as a common language that helps advisors communicate their role in the success of their students and the campus. Conversations around implementation of new, or changes to existing, advising activities begin with how they will support the service goal and promote student learning.

IV. Service Outcomes Assessed this Year

Academic Difficulty Interventions

In 2017-18, the workgroup continued its focus on Goal 4: *Provide advising tailored to the distinctive needs of specific student populations.* Building on data previously analyzed and the logic model developed in the previous two academic years, the group committed to developing and implementing a consistent academic difficulty intervention program for students on Subject to Academic Dismissal (SD) status. A preliminary review of the data collected over the 2016-17 academic year informed changes to the 2017-18 academic difficulty intervention program.

V. Assessment Methods/Strategy

Academic Difficulty Interventions

Continuing to assess the effectiveness of the updated academic difficulty intervention, the group examined the spring semester GPAs for first year students who had an academic standing of 'Subject to Academic Dismissal' (SD) as a result of their Fall 2016 or Fall 2017 grades. In an effort to align support for students on SD status, the group continued to use the previously created student learning and outcomes and standard communications and protocol, curriculum and tools. These tools included common scripts for each of the two or three required meetings, email templates, an Academic Support Agreement, and an Academic Reflection Form.

Additionally, the group collected qualitative data, including students' reported reasons for difficulty and resources utilized, to determine potential correlations with quantitative data (e.g. major, GPA or academic standing). Data was collected in pre- and post- intervention surveys (See Appendix B for pre survey and Appendix C for post survey). This method allowed us to differentiate interventions based on student attributes whether the current intervention is good for all students at all points of their career.

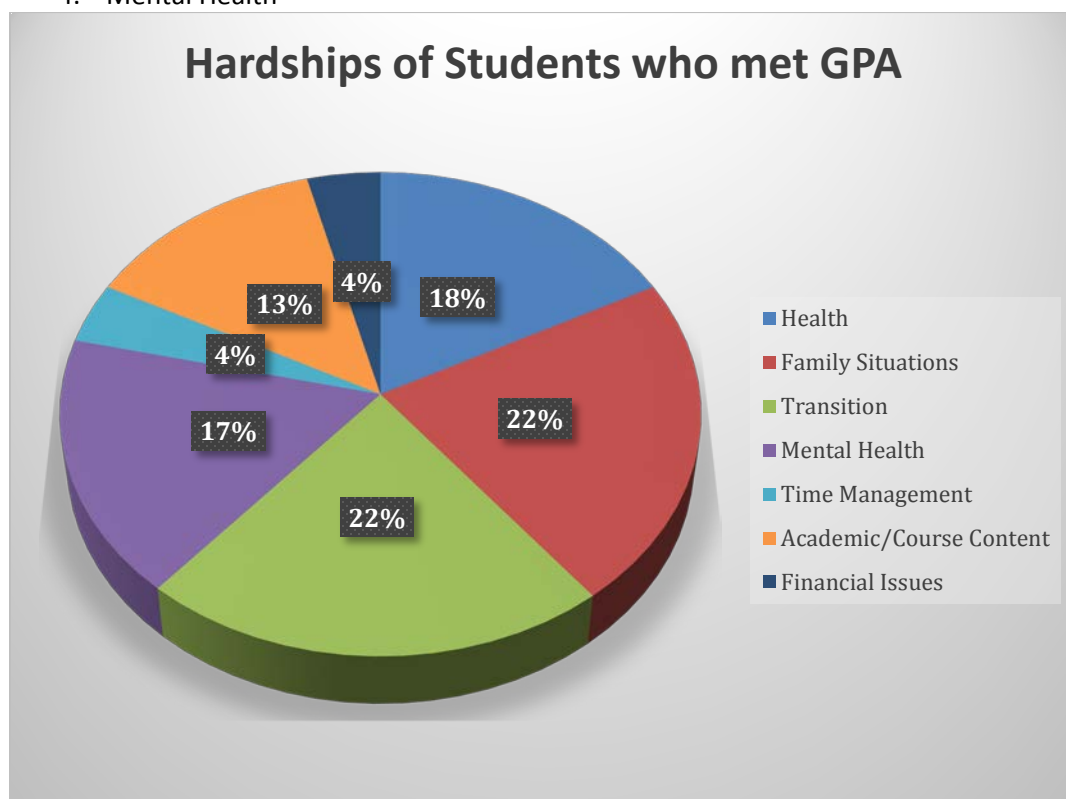## VI. Results

Academic Difficulty Interventions

To examine the effectiveness of the revised academic difficulty intervention, an analysis was conducted on the spring grade point averages of the fall 2016 and fall 2017 Subject to Academic Dismissal (SD) cohorts, a total of 173 students. We collected fall and spring GPAs for all first-year students who completed the intervention. A paired t-test (n = 173, t = -10.8455, p = 0.0000) was completed and found the spring GPAs were statistically significant than the fall GPAs for all first-year students in the sample.

Updated: 18 April 2019

The spring GPAs were also statistically significant for students by School/advising units as well.

An analysis was done to see if there was any correlation with the students who met the GPA requirement to the strategies used while on academic difficulty. Through the data collected in the Academic Reflection and Academic Support Final Reflection we were able to identify the following:

Top four reported hardships that led students to academic difficulty who met the GPA requirement at the end of term:
1. Health
2. Family situations
3. Transitions
4. Mental Health

Hardships of Students who met GPA

- Health — 18%
- Family Situations — 22%
- Transition — 22%
- Mental Health — 17%
- Time Management — 4%
- Academic/Course Content — 13%
- Financial Issues — 4%

Top four strategies reportedly used by students who met the GPA requirement:
1. Office Hours
2. Time Management
3. Study Groups
4. PALS (tutoring)

Updated: 18 April 2019

STRATEGIES USED BY STUDENTS WHO MET GPA

Reading
Complete Assignments
Study Habits/Skills
Academic Advising
Note Taking
Tutoring
Attendance
PALS
Math Center
Study Groups
Office Hours
Time Management
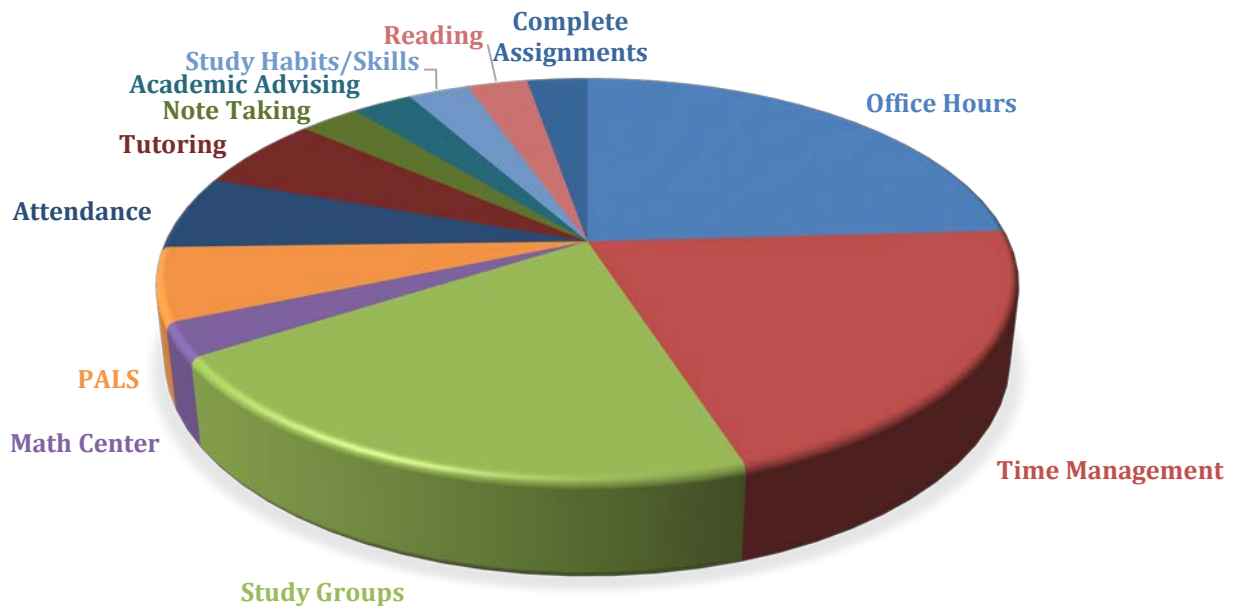
Limitations of the data

The group recognizes that grades are not typically used in the assessment of student learning. However, Grade Point Averages (GPA) were used as a measurement of the success of the intervention as a student's GPA is used to measure their academic standing, which in turn is one element used to determine their eligibility for continued enrollment at the institution.

While the group made every attempt to keep all the intervention documents the same in spring 2017 and spring 2018 to keep the data consistent, one document was slightly changed that hindered how the data was collected. As seen on Appendix B-1 and B-2, question #2 was changed from a free response to a forced choice. Due to this limitation, it was difficult to code the responses for that question.

VII. Conclusions: Explain what the results mean

Academic Difficulty Interventions

The continued attention on the intervention provided to students on Subject to Academic Dismissal standing yielded positive results for the advising units and students. Students continued to receive a common intervention experience, no matter which unit provided the service.

Our focus was on Goal 4: *Provide advising that is tailored to the distinctive needs of specific student populations.* Grade point averages were collected for first year students who completed the interventions in spring 2017 and spring 2018. An analysis found that the spring GPAs are statistically significant from the fall GPAs and demonstrates that the GPAs significantly increased over time. This finding indicates a more consistent outcome for SD students regardless of their advising unit.

Notable findings from the pre-survey showed that the majority of students indicated physical health, family situations, transitions, and mental health as reasons that led them to academic difficulty. The reasons indicated

by students do not necessarily correlate to the resources used by students at the end of the intervention. This does not mean a correlation needs to exist between the two but is important to note for follow up investigation, should the group feel it would be beneficial.

Data collected demonstrated that the top four strategies used by students were all listed as required tasks as part of their "Academic Support Agreement" (see Appendix A). We can conclude that although the academic interventions are tailored to the specific needs of the student, students will most likely use the required resources more often than the supplemental resources. This included a "Time Management" online workshop that was required prior to the initial meeting with the advisor.

VIII. Actions

Academic Difficulty Interventions

Data demonstrates a uniform intervention strategy for students in Subject to Academic Dismissal status does have an impact on student outcomes and overall GPAs. Further analysis is needed to determine the correlation between what factors leads students to be on academic difficulty, how end-of-term appeal decisions are made by the Schools, and what specific resources are required for students to complete the intervention. It is recommended that the appeal review process be evaluated to provide a consistent foundation that can be tailored to each unit's unique student population. It is important to note, some schools have faculty-approved decisions hence the need to have flexibility with the review process.

To address our data limitations, a decision was made to utilize a Qualtrics survey to collect pre and post data. This tool will allow for a seamless collection of data, avoid the need to transcribe data, and reduce the categorical implicit bias. Additionally, we made procedural improvements to the survey collection process for an easier student interface, while updating the wording on some of the questions to improve the initial interaction between the student and their advisor.

Students identified challenges at the beginning of the term that impacted their academic performance. The advisor provided resources to address those challenges. Further analysis is needed to evaluate whether they used the resources that addressed those challenges.

IX. Resource Implications

It appears that academic difficulty interventions contributed to an increase in students' GPA from Fall to Spring for this cohort. Academic advisors will continue to provide the same intervention moving forward. The assistance of an assessment professional is needed to continue monitoring the effectiveness of this intervention. In addition, academic advisors will continue to receive annual training on Subject to Academic Dismissal interventions to ensure consistency in delivery.

Appendix A. Academic Support Agreement

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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Supporting the Educational Journey of our Students

Academic Support Agreement

Due to the approval of your dismissal appeal, you are now required to complete this agreement as a condition of your continued enrollment. This agreement has been created by your Academic Advisor to assist you in understanding your responsibility as a student and to facilitate the support you need in order to achieve success at the University of California, Merced. Your initials and signature indicate you have read this contract, understand it, and agree to its terms.

Read and Initial:

_____ I've read and understand the Academic Standing Policy as outlined on the Office of the Registrar website (http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/policies/academic-standing).

_____ I understand I'm required to maintain a minimum semester and cumulative grade point average of 2.0. **Failure to do so may result in academic dismissal from the University.**

_____ I understand academic success is dependent upon me to utilize campus resources, and I agree to seek out campus resources that will help me obtain good academic standing. Additionally, I agree to contact my academic advisor immediately as I encounter personal, social, academic, or financial difficulties.

_____ Repeat failed course(s), unless failed course(s) is not offered or not required for changing majors.

_____ I will implement any changes to my course schedule as instructed by my advisor, and I will consult my advisor before making changes to my course schedule and plan of study.

Complete the following **with your academic advisor:**

I, _____, accept and will comply
with the following: *(Print Full Name)*

1. Bring this signed agreement to my Academic Advisor by **August 31st, 2018.**
2. Meet with my academic advisor during week of **October 15th** and week of **December 3rd.**
3. Utilize professor/TA office hours, **PALS tutoring** – learning.ucmerced.edu, **STEM Resource Center** – stemresourcecenter.ucmerced.edu, the **Math Center** – mathcenter.ucmerced.edu, the **Chem Center** – chemcenter.ucmerced.edu, the **Writing Center** - library.ucmerced.edu/research/students/writing-center
4. Practice calculating your projected GPA using the UC Merced GPA Calculator Fall GPA* needed to return to good standing: _____
5. Visit appropriate University offices as referred: ———————→

You will agree on additional action items:
6.

7.

☐ Career Services
   (hire.ucmerced.edu)

☐ CAPS
   (counseling.ucmerced.edu)

☐ Attend a workshop
   (learning.ucmerced.edu)

☐ Fiat Lux/Guardian/Undoc
   (learning.ucmerced.edu)

☐ Office of Student Life
   (studentlife.ucmerced.edu)

☐ Visit a Peer Mentor/Advisor

☐ Basic Needs Security
   (cec.ucmerced.edu/students/basic-needs-security-resources)

I UNDERSTAND FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT MAY RESULT IN ACADEMIC DISMISSAL AT THE END OF THE CONTRACTED TERM.

Student ID# _____   Student's Signature _____

Advisor's Signature _____   Date _____

* Please note that earning a term GPA above a 2.0 may not put you in good standing if your cumulative GPA is under 2.0

7

University of California, Merced
Academic Advising
5200 N. Lake Road, Merced, CA 95343
advising.ucmerced.edu

Academic Reflection

Name: _____ UCM ID: _____

Major: _____ Minor: _____

School: ☐ SSHA ☐ SNS ☐ SOE ☐ Undeclared Date: _____

You must complete the following reflection prior to meeting with your academic advisor. Respond carefully to the questions below in order to make the most of you meeting with your academic advisor.

Section 1

Refer to your Unofficial transcripts to complete this section. (Log into MyUCM Portal, Select MyStudentRecord, Select Student Record, Select Academic Transcript)	
Look up your term GPA from Spring 2017:	
Look up your cumulative GPA:	

Section 2

1. Describe your academic participation in Spring 2017. Did you do the following? Please check Yes or No

Activity		Yes	No	Sometimes
a.	Attend lecture and discussion on a regular basis?			
b.	Take notes in class/labs on a regular basis.			
c.	Keep up with your reading and homework assignments regularly?			
d.	Go to office hours and tutoring regularly?			
e.	Track your grades in each class?			
f.	Were you involved in clubs or sports?			

2. Briefly describe what led to your academic difficulty this past semester?

3. In Spring 2017, did you earn an A or B in any course? If so, what contributed to your success?

4. In the courses for Spring 2017 that you earned a C- or less, what was most challenging?

5. Look up the following deadlines on the Registrar's or Students First Center website:

Action/Requirement	Deadline/Date
Last day to add classes online	
Last day to add classes with instructor permission	
Last day to drop classes online	
Mid-semester grades posted	
Last day to withdraw from a class with a "W"	

6. Participate in the online Time Management: Strategies For Success workshop. Name a strategy from the workshop that you will utilize this upcoming semester.

8

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MERCED | **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Supporting the Educational Journey of our Students

Academic Reflection

Name: _____ UCM ID: _____

Major: _____ Minor: _____

School: ☐ SSHA ☐ SNS ☐ SOE ☐ Undeclared   Date: _____

You must complete the following reflection prior to meeting with your academic advisor. Respond carefully to the questions below in order to make the most of you meeting with your academic advisor.

Section 1

Refer to your Unofficial transcripts to complete this section. (Log into MyUCM Portal, Select MyStudentRecord, Select Student Record, Select Academic Transcript)	
Look up your term GPA from Fall 2017:	
Look up your cumulative GPA:	

Section 2

1. Describe your academic participation in Fall 2017. Did you do the following? Please check Yes or No

Activity		Yes	No	Sometimes
a.	Attend lecture and discussion on a regular basis?			
b.	Take notes in class/labs on a regular basis.			
c.	Keep up with your reading and homework assignments regularly?			
d.	Go to office hours and tutoring regularly?			
e.	Track your grades in each class?			
f.	Were you involved in clubs or sports?			

2. Briefly describe what led to your academic difficulty this past semester. Circle all that apply.
   a. Personal issues (e.g family, roommate, health)   d. Motivation (classes not interesting, procrastination, unclear of major)
   b. Study skills (time management and adjustment)   e. Other _____
   _____

3. In Fall 2017, did you earn an A or B in any course? If so, what contributed to your success?

4. In the courses for Fall 2017 that you earned a C- or less, what was most challenging?

5. Look up the following deadlines on the Registrar's or Students First Center website:

Action/Requirement	Deadline/Date
Last day to add classes online	
Last day to add classes with instructor permission	
Last day to drop classes online	
Mid-semester grades posted	
Last day to withdraw from a class with a "W"	

6. Participate in the online **Time Management: Strategies For Success** workshop (visit: www.studentlingo.com/ucmerced, create an account then search and complete the online workshop). Name a strategy from the workshop that you will utilize this upcoming semester.

9

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Supporting the Educational Journey of our Students

Academic Support
Final Reflection

Name:_____ ID Number:_____

Please list your current Spring 2018 courses, write down current grades based off of CatCourses, and using the GPA calculator (http://registrar.ucmerced.edu/gpa_calculator), write down grades needed to get back into good academic standing*

Course	Current Grade (based on CatCourses)	Minimum grades needed to get back into good standing (cum 2.0)
Ex: Math 005	B-/C+ or B-	B
	Target term GPA:	

After our initial meeting, what strategies/tools/services did you utilize this semester on your road to good standing?

What strategies/tools/services will you utilize to prepare for finals week?

What action(s)/change(s) did you choose this semester, that you're proud of, and that you will continue to utilize in your academic career?

*Please note that earning a term GPA above of a 2.0 may not put you in good standing if your cumulative GPA is under 2.0

Updated: 18 April 2019