White Mountains Community College

# Student Services Program Review

**Program**

Advising

*Date*

**04/27/2022**

**WMCC Mission Statement**

White Mountains Community College is a comprehensive student-centered educational institution providing opportunities for educational and career mobility while sustaining community development.

**WMCC Vision Statement**

White Mountains Community College will excel as a sustainable educational and community resource for the North Country. Our vision is to be the region's first choice for an accessible, high-quality education, providing direction and opportunity for those seeking a new path: a new career, a trade, or transfer to a four-year institution.

**Student Services Mission Statement**

Student Services provides high-quality, student-focused support, assistance, and services responsive to individual needs in a caring environment that enhances success and empowers students to maximize their potential. The administration, faculty, and staff regard student services as an integral part of the total educational program at this college. A wide range of student service programs helps to meet the needs and interests of the student body. Every effort is made to know students as individuals and to serve their individual needs.

**Preface**

The Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) is a process intended to assist each student services program in fulfilling its mission and that of the College. This process is to be guided by the standards set forth by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. The CPR framework guides the College in:

- Resource allocation
- Improvement of student learning through the provision of systematic feedback
- Strengthening the program's ability to maintain sustainability
- Strengthening the bonds within the college community and fostering collaboration
- Generating a culture of continuous improvement

The process is meant to be a collaborative one in which all relevant staff members work together with the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA), as well as other members of Leadership, staff from other departments, and faculty to review how effectively all elements of the program – structure, staffing, budget, facilities and services - contribute to the mission of the College and to the success of students in meeting established Program Outcomes.

Minutes from relevant committee meetings, approved structural proposals and changes, and other similar documentation should also be considered as part of the CPR and are to be submitted as appendices to the final report. These documents provide valuable information about the dynamics of the program.

A staff member will be assigned to be responsible for putting together the initial package with the support of the VPSA and other staff as needed. All staff are encouraged to actively participate in the CPR process and approach the process with the goal of program improvement in mind.

## CAS Standards

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has developed standards to assess the quality of student services programs. WMCC has chosen to use these standards to guide our Comprehensive Program Review for student services programs. These Standards are divided into the 12 parts outlined below Section I of this document covers the first CAS Standard. Section II covers the second standard. CAS standards 3-5 are addressed in Section III. Section IV focuses on standards 6-9. Finally, Standards 10-12 are addressed in Section V.

**"1. Mission: This** section identifies the purpose and essential characteristics of the functional area. It may also provide guidance on themes that are important to include in a mission statement for the functional area. Guidelines in this section may provide insight into how the functional area's scope varies depending on institutional type or context. This section does not include details of specific program elements and/or services provided by the functional area.
**2. Program and Services: This** section explains how the functional area is structured and what it does. It further outlines programs, services, and/or resources provided by the functional area, including pivotal aspects of the function's performance.
**3. Student Learning, Development, and Success:** This section explains how the functional area contributes to student learning, development, and success, how the approach aligns with a student learning and development model, and how these outcomes are measured.
**4. Assessment: This** section addresses the functional area's approach to assessment, including how it is conducted, analyzed, and used. It addresses the key assessment practices for this functional area.
**5. Access, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: This** section outlines the functional area's role in advancing and maintaining access, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace and educational environments. It addresses fundamental requirements, philosophies, procedures, and/or approaches specific to the functional area.
**6. Leadership, Management, and Supervision: This** section describes the responsibilities of functional area leaders, managers, and supervisors and how these individuals advance the work of the functional area. It may address initiatives that are key to the functional area's success, which leaders must or should advocate on behalf of for their programs.
**7. Human Resources: This** section covers who is employed by the functional area (including professional and paraprofessional staff and student employees and volunteers). This section discusses employee qualifications or credentials, the functional area's employment practices, and personnel training and professional development. Communication and Collaboration
**8. Communication and Collaboration: This** section identifies key collaborators and partners for the functional area and discusses how the functional area shares information and promotes its services. It identifies the key institutional offices/departments, or external organizations with whom the functional area should consult or engage. It may address considerations regarding outreach and information-sharing.
**9. Ethics, Law, and Policy: This** section describes standards for ethical practice, points to key legal issues and obligations of practitioners, and outlines policies and procedures that are critical to the work of the functional area. This section may identify laws or policies specific to the functional area that should be followed to ensure compliance with institutional policy or with state, provincial, or federal law. This section also addresses required or recommended ethical considerations that are unique to the field.
**10. Financial Resources:** This section provides an overview of important fiscal considerations for the functional area, including how programs and services must or should be funded; financial planning and accounting processes that may be necessary; and measures that must or should exist for accountability and sound management of financial resources.
**11. Technology: This** section describes the role of technology in the functional area. It provides insight into the technological needs of the program, ways it is leveraged to engage users, and ongoing management of IT infrastructure.
**12. Facilities and Infrastructure: This** section details the facilities, equipment, space, and other infrastructure needs of the functional area. It may address issues related to how or where the functional area should be physically located; requirements or restrictions related to space, sustainability, or safety; and considerations that may exist regarding equipment acquisition and/or use."

**Comprehensive Program Review Committee Process and Procedures**

1. The CPR template will be provided to the VPSA at least 6 months in advance of the committee review date. It is expected that the VPSA will work together with the appropriate staff to complete the review.
2. Once the review is complete, the VPSA will review, respond in the area provided, and sign that he/she has read and provided the feedback and input on the necessary section of the template.
3. The committee will schedule a date for both the VPSA and the appointed staff member(s) to attend a CPR committee meeting. During this time, the student services team will be given 10 minutes to provide a summary of program strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Following this, the committee will seek clarification and there will be a period for questions and answers. At the end of the hour, the student services team will leave the meeting so that the committee can discuss the review.
4. The CPR committee will gather relevant information from the review and meeting to formulate a letter to the student services team addressing recommendations. The VPSA and college leadership team will also receive a copy of the letter. It is up to the VPSA to coordinate with the college leadership team to discuss the recommendations and work with the appropriate student services staff to develop action items.

Should the CPR committee and/or college leadership team feel that a program needs to be reviewed again before the 5-year cycle (i.e., 2 or 3 years), the VPSA will be notified and will notify the appropriate student services staff.

**2022-2023 Comprehensive Program Review Committee Members**

Sarah Baillargeon

Nicole Bourque

Rachel Dandeneau

Mark Desmarais

Amanda Gaeb

Jonathan Mullins

Nikolaus Nutting

Mary Orff

Suzanne Wasileski (Chair)

**Resources**

Suzanne Wasileski – Institutional Data

Kristen Miller – Vice President of Academic Affairs

Mark Desmarais – Vice President of Student Affairs

## Section I: Mission and Target Population

Program Mission Statement:

By utilizing a student-centered, holistic approach with careful attention to institutional policies and learning outcomes, we strive to create an individualized experience for each student, focused on their personal, academic, and future professional goals and needs.

1. Explain how the service uniquely satisfies an institutional or community need. Comment on its alignment with the College's and Student Service's mission statements.

At the heart of the WMCC Mission is the concept of student-centered education. Our mission is to create and document efficient practices that allow us to individualize the education experience for each student. One of the primary ways we have tried to do that in the past 3 years is by implementing an onboarding process. This process was created to empower students, to create their own unique experience at WMCC to better meet their goals and needs. The hope is that they can build from that foundation with their Program Advisor to further individualize and get the most out of their education.

2. Identify the service's target population(s). Summarize activities directed toward student engagement with the service and the success of these efforts.

- Currently the primary target population is matriculated students. We strive to advise and serve all students but focused our initial efforts on matriculated students. All matriculated students are assigned a Program Advisor upon admittance to the program. At that point, incoming, matriculated students all go through the onboarding process with an Enrollment Specialist and are handed off to their Program Advisor.
    - Incoming Students: All incoming students are alerted to the steps of the Onboarding Process in a way that allows them to take all the necessary steps up through making an appointment with the Enrollment Specialist. From that point, during the appointment, the Enrollment Specialist guides the student through the rest of the process. Not all students take the initiative to work these first steps, completing FAFSA, setting up their EasyLogin Username and Password, logging in to Navigate, Making an Appointment with an Enrollment Specialist. Therefore, we also have a plan to guide them through those steps as well. We have an Outreach team that contacts students and guides them through these first steps if they do not do it on their own. **(See Attachment A**). These engagement efforts have been quite successful. We are now able to work through the entire list of admitted students and onboard all that are choosing to enroll and for all but a few that do not enroll we have confirmed the reason they are not enrolling. Occasionally a student does skip some steps or do something out of order and does not end up being fully Onboarded. However, that is very rare and getting rarer each semester as we tighten up the process
    - Current Students: During each semester, we have (in the last two semesters) implemented an Advising Month where currently enrolled, matriculated students are encouraged to meet with

their Program Advisors to discuss any changes to their preferences, goals, and needs, and to review their academic plan and register for classes if needed. **(See Attachment B)** The students are encouraged to participate as follows…

- Students are first sent an email via Navigate Enrollment Campaign.
- Advisors then reach out to their own students to arrange times to meet. Some Advisors set up Appointment Campaigns in Navigate, which send links to students so that students can simply choose a time and modality (phone, virtual, in-person) for the meeting.
- A reminder text is sent out a week after the beginning of the month and again a week before the end to the students that have not yet registered.
- About halfway through the month, an email reminder is sent as part of the Enrollment Campaign and a pop-up is added to the Canvas Dashboard of all students that have not yet registered.

This process has improved the quantity and quality of conversations between Advisors and Advisees. However, this is a less centralized process, with many more players. Each program has its own Advisor and has its own unique processes and barriers; therefore, it is not as predictable as the process is for incoming students. It is also the case that there is a lot more enthusiasm for and from new students than current students who may still be struggling through their current semester and not ready to look forward to upcoming semesters. Therefore, we still leave Advising Month with more students than we would like unaccounted for.

- The Early College program has also adopted similar procedures to serve that population. The collaboration between the Enrollment Counselor and Coordinator of Educational Partnerships and Access has helped make this process much smoother. They will continue to work together as well as with the incoming Accessibilities Services and ASC coordinators to
- Non-Degree students are not assigned an Advisor, so they work with the Coordinator of Advising/Director of Onboarding and Student Success or Enrollment Counselor. We have not yet formalized a process for Non-Degree students. There is no way to identify them prior to the time they register for a class therefore they do not readily fit in to the current onboarding process. We do have a goal to create a more formalized process for Non-Degree students next.
- At this time, there is no plan in place for students in Non-credit classes. That is a long-term goal, but no work has begun on that objective

## Section II: Program and Services

1. Describe the program and the services that are offered

As mentioned earlier, the most extensive advising program is for matriculated students so that is going to be the focus of this description. Advising is ongoing and varies from student to student but there are common areas of advising and common checkpoints…

- Students enter in to advising through Onboarding which includes…
    - Financial discussions and help with FAFSA and other resources for grants and scholarships
    - Set up of EasyLogin username and password and help with access to and use of online resources and platforms
    - Discussion and documentation of preferences, goals, and needs
    - Creation of an individualized Academic Map based on those preferences, goals, and needs
    - Connection with appropriate support services
    - Connection to the student's Program Advisor
    - Help finding a list of required textbooks and other materials
    - Making an appointment with Financial Services to go through the student's account
- Students should meet with their Program Advisor at least once per semester. This can be an informal meeting when they see each other for class or it can be a phone call or sometimes even a series of emails, but the student should check-in with the advisor at least once per semester to check in on the following…
    - Discuss changes to preferences, goals, and needs
    - Discuss academic progress
    - Ensure student's enrollment is in line with the preferences, goals and needs and the level of progress they have made to that point
- Additionally, there are things that can be discussed during Onboarding or an Advising Check-in but may also pop up at other times, such as…
    - Alternate credit options such as transfer credits, PLA (Prior Learning Assessment) credits, Credit-By-Exam, or Experiential Learning, as well as Course Waivers and Course Substitutions
    - Internships and other outside placements
    - Financial Aid SAP Appeals
    - Financial Aid Consortium Agreements
    - Transfer or Employment Advising

2. Are there any structural changes needed in this program? If so, describe the changes necessary and, where possible, provide data that highlight the need

Much of the structure and framework is actually there and functioning pretty well for matriculated students. The project we are focusing on right now is documenting the processes in a way that is organized, consistent, easy to access and follow and clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, and accountability metrics for each player. We are trying to do that by creating a timeline of tasks that students must accomplish from the time that they show interest in attending WMCC through and beyond their graduation. To do this we created a template for a "Student Task Management Guide" and are trying to complete that for each of the identified tasks **(See Attachment C)**

Having said that, I must say that creating this structure has really been a process and sometimes a struggle and there are still some parts that need some work. The completion of the documentation above is really the key to solidifying the structure. The biggest problem has been that different people have interpreted the details of the program differently and without one, centralized guide that everyone has seen and agreed to, coming to consensus has sometimes been difficult. The specific areas of struggle have been…

- Defining roles and responsibilities – Specifically, there are certain things that must be done by people hired as a Faculty Advisor, Staff Advisor / Counsellor. Enrollment Specialists and Program Assistants cannot be responsible for these things. **(See Attachment D)** However, that does not mean Enrollment Specialist and Program Assistants do not have a role to play in these processes. Coming to specific, clear definitions of each role is crucial and has been fairly difficult. For the most part, as a broad generalization, we have come to an understanding that Advisors are ultimately responsible for the progress of their students and Enrollment Specialists and Program Assistants can assist students and Advisors with the logistics of the tasks. For each student task, we are working on more specifically defining the role for each level. Even without having completed all these Student Task Management Guides, simply discussing and outlining and organizing them has helped. We are hoping, however, with Student Services back up to nearly fully-staffed this summer, we may be able to focus on this some more
- Defining Advising – In taking the view of Advising defined by the list of Student Tasks shown in **Attachment C**, many of the things on the list straddle boundaries between all departments of the college. Students need guidance in many aspects of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Financial Services. An illustrative example of this is Academic Alerts and Progress Reports. This is an area of the structure that needs some shoring up and is on the agenda of some upcoming meetings. Progress Reports and Alerts are a way for Faculty to let Advising and Student Support Services know that there are students in need of some help. Advisors can find a list of their students with Alerts on their Dashboard in Navigate. Enrollment Specialists and the Academic Success Center Staff have access to that information for individual students as well but do not get a list. The Director of Onboarding and Student Success can and does pull a report with a list and share it with both Advisors and Enrollment Specialists and Academic Success Center staff. However, Progress Reports and Alerts are underutilized by Faculty. Our adoption is better than many colleges, but we still typically are under 50% response rates have declined. **(See Attachment E).** This may, in part, be because there was a particular emphasis made when we first started the alerts **(See Attachment F)** and we have not put as much effort in since then. Also, this is an area where we have yet to clearly define who is responsible for what type of follow up when an Alert does come in. We are planning a meeting to discuss these issues and will hopefully make some improvements, additionally, when the ASC is staffed again, that will help.
- Defining Accountability – Another issue with Advising is that success is measured in terms of graduation rates, retention rates, withdrawal rates, failure rates, etc. There are so many factors that can go into each of those things. There must be some sort of accountability for Advisors but, as mentioned, Advisors rely on Enrollment Specialist and Program Assistants to do their job as well. In addition, the largest factor in these metrics is the students themselves. Defining roles and responsibilities, as discussed above, is the first step in being able to create fair metrics to use to measure the performance of Advisors and support staff. We are not there yet. The closer we get to defining roles and responsibilities the

closer we get to being able to work on this.

3. Clearly define the goals of the program.

The goal of Advising is to guide all students to and along a path that is right for them. We have many structural, organizational, and logistical goals for the program which are described throughout this document but really the ultimate goal of Advising, itself is to help students realize their potential.

The things we wish to work on to be better able to meet that goal are described in more detail throughout this document but can be summarized as follows…

- Streamline processes, making it as efficient as possible to deliver Advising Services.
- Provide students with clear, user-friendly, self-service pathways for Advising services. **(See Attachment G)**
- Document these processes in a clear, organized, easily accessed way
- Document the roles and responsibilities of Advisors and other staff members that serve the Advising program.
- Create metrics that fairly and accurately measure the success of the Advising program in terms of student success.
- Create metrics that fairly and accurately measure the extent to which Advisors and staff are meeting their responsibilities.
- Provide all Advisors and staff with adequate space and technology to work with students.

4. The College has identified eight competencies that guide faculty and staff in their efforts to graduate an 'educated person'. How does this program contribute to this effort

The Advising program must rely on the rest of the college to deliver the 8 competencies in the Educated Person statement. The competencies are primarily met in the classroom and through support in the Academic Success Center. The role of Advising is to get the students to the right places to internalize that learning, which means, guiding them to the classes that are the best fit for them, getting them in to the support services that they may need academically, personally, and financially, and supporting them in the journey so that they are able to learn to their full potential

## Section III: Student Success

1. How does this program contribute to the overall success of students? Indicate the student success metrics such as graduation or retention rate that this program contributes to. Provide the college-wide data associated with those metrics and describe the program's contribution

WMCC consistently has very high persistence, retention, and graduation rates. There is no doubt that the Advising contributes to this in a significant way. At this time, however, there is no plan in place to specifically measure our program's contribution. Looking solely at these numbers is not a fair measurement of the success or failure of Advising, its processes, or individual Advisors because there are so many additional factors that go into those numbers. Therefore, I would love to have the time to create an assessment plan with specific metrics and goals that fairly and accurately measure the success of the program, the Advisors, and the support staff involved.
To illustrate what I mean here are a few examples…

- Spring to Fall retention numbers are disproportionately unfair representations of the following programs…
    - Health Science – Many of these students are basing their registration each semester on acceptance to Nursing, or other programs, and therefore that could change semester to semester and so they often register one semester at a time. They also often move around between colleges; they are typically looking to get a set of 5-10 classes completed and they will look at multiple colleges to find the best way to accomplish that, given their personal circumstances.
    - Liberal Arts – Similar to Health Science, many of our Liberal Arts students are looking at transfer options every semester and therefore are also likely to register for one semester at a time.
    - Medical Assistant – This program graduates its students in August, not May, therefore, Spring enrolled students have no reason to register for Fall, Summer will be their final semester.
    - Massage Therapy – This program also completes in August rather than May.
    - Driver Education Instructor – This program is split in to two parts, the 3 courses required for a Provisional Certificate with the state (Fall semester on the Program Map) and the 5 courses then required for a Standard Certificate (Spring semester on the program map). The Provisional Certificate classes are offered every semester, but the other classes are only offered in the Spring and students have 2 years to complete those classes to get their Standard Certificate. Students enrolled in the Spring that are not graduating likely completed their Provisional Certificate classes and there will be nothing offered in the Fall for them to take

To illustrate this… Of the 292 Spring 2022 students that Advising is tracking for future registration, on 4/28/2022, 92 of them are registered for Fall 2022 **(See Attachment H)**, that is a 31.5% Spring to Fall retention rate. However, there are 48 additional students that are registered for either Summer 2022 or Spring 2023 for a total of 47.9% of the students that are registered for future semesters. Of those 48 additional students, 24, are Health Science students. An additional 12 students are from Liberal Arts, Medical Assistant or Massage Therapy programs for a total of 75% of the 48 students coming from one of these 4 majors. For comparison, these 4 majors comprise about 37% of the total number of students being tracked, showing that it is just about twice as likely as would be expected for a student that is registered for a future semester other than Fall to be in one of these 4 majors. Health Science in particular, though it is, admittedly, a large program, it makes up only about 22% of the students being tracked, less than half the 50% that this major comprises of the 48 students registered for a future semester other than Fall.

- Another metric that I feel like Advising changes have a larger effect on than the numbers seem to indicate is withdrawals and failures. We now make sure that all students wishing to withdraw speak to an Advisor and/or Financial Aid before making their decision. We also alert Advisors when their students are not attending/participating the first week of class so that they can intervene to make sure the student isn't withdrawn from the class for lack of participation. Anecdotally, things go so much smoother now than they did. There are so many fewer issues at the time of registration verification than there used to be. There are so many fewer mistakes and student-instructor disagreements. The second through fourth weeks of the semester, in particular, used to be a very miserable time. That is no longer the case. However, the overall number of NAs, WFs, AFs, and Fs have not changed considerably, of course, we have been in a pandemic which has really affected the ability of many of our students to focus on college. However, I am also not sure it is the best metric anyway because students sometimes just cannot successfully complete their classes, despite all our best efforts. One thing that has changed dramatically, which I think is, perhaps a better way to judge the changes we have made is the amount of bad debt we carry each semester. Bad debt comes about, in large part, from students making poor decisions about registration and withdrawal. The safeguards and checkpoints that we now have in place I believe have largely contributed to students making decisions that mitigate damage.
- Similarly, we used to see so many students with very ugly transcripts. They would have whole, full-time semesters with AFs, they would have a long list of classes that were not counted toward their degree. I know this has decreased tremendously. We have virtually eliminated many of these issues; we do not have students taking large numbers of credits that are not counted toward their major, we do not have students walking away with over 60 credits and no degree, we do not have students registering for 5 classes and getting 5 AFs. We have recently had quite a few students return to complete their degree and we have a handful that have been here for a very long time and looking at the jumble that is their transcripts reminds me of how far we've come. However, I am not sure the best way to measure that progress
- Another thing that Advising changes have had a huge effect on is workflow. There are far few IT tickets, the staff in the Financial Services office reports that their interactions with students are easier and more effective and efficient because the student understands how to access their platforms, where to find given information, and has a general idea of what to expect in terms of billing and Financial Aid. As was just mentioned, what the Registrar and I referred to as "NA season", when Roster Verifications come in, used to be an extremely stressful time for us. It is

not anymore. There used to be no process for approving Concentrations for Interdisciplinary Studies, or for assigning credit for Prior Learning, and both options were very underutilized. Now, we have clear, straightforward processes that allow us to meet the needs of far more students with far less stress. But, again, I am not sure how best to measure this effect.

2. How is student success measured within this program?

As I mentioned, there is no real plan in place, but I would love to be able to create one

a. How successful are students according to these metrics? Include data.

Again, we have not yet established metrics that adequately measure Advising's effect on student success. Anecdotally, I have many stories of individual student successes and we get so much positive feedback from students about how much easier we make this sometimes-overwhelming endeavor of college attendance feel.

b. How accurately do these metrics reflect student success?

This is largely addressed above. I really think existing metrics are not adequate. A plan needs to be put in place.

3. Is the service easily accessible; is the process to access the service well communicated to potential students? Include discussion of remote and virtual access options

This is something I think we do very well. The Onboarding process brings all students into the college in a very efficient, informative, and easy to follow way. **Attachment A**, referred to in the first section of this document, outlines how students access Onboarding and Onboarding is the gateway to the Advising program. All incoming students have the option of in-person, phone, or Zoom appointments with their New Student Enrollment Specialist during which they get a one-on-one introduction to what to expect at WMCC and guidance on all the logistics that they need to manage to be ready to start on the first day of classes. Students, in Onboarding, are told who their Advisor is and they are connected with them after our meeting. This leaves the student with a greater sense that there is an actual person that they can reach out to and expect guidance from. Previously, many students didn't even know who their Advisor was and, because their initial introduction to the college was a large Orientation with a rushed session of filling out paperwork followed by a slow wait in a line to pay their bill, they did not leave with a feeling that there were people that would be there to take time with them to consider their individual preferences, goals, and needs and therefore, they didn't reach out. I do not believe that is the case anymore but, that is yet another thing that I am not sure how to measure

## Section IV: Organizational Structure

1. Describe the leadership and supervisory structure of the program. Is there a need for a change in that structure? If so, describe the changes needed and, where possible, provide data that highlight the need.

This has actually been our primary difficulty. The Enrollment Specialists report to two different members of Leadership and the Program Advisors report to a third. Also, there was no one that reported to the Coordinator of Advising. This made it very difficult to manage. As the Coordinator of Advising, I felt I was tasked with assessing the needs and then creating, documenting, training, and implementing policies and procedures around Advising but had no authority to do most of what needed to be done and therefore had to bring together the three different supervisors who did have the authority. There is a lot that I could say about the difficulties this created, however, I do not think it is necessary. Firstly, it is probably pretty clear that this was not an ideal structure and secondly, I do not think it warrants the time in this review because this structure is changing a bit and it would be more helpful to use this time to look ahead.

- The new ASC Coordinator and the new Accessibility Services Coordinator positions have both been changed to Counselor I positions. That change will allow us to have additional staff members that are able to serve as an Advisor in the absence of a Program Advisor. The distinction in the classification of the position determines whether a staff member is able to do things like sign off on a Financial Aid SAP appeal. Previously most positions were classified as Program Assistant. Anyone with that classification cannot have Advising duties. This difference has been particularly troublesome in defining the role of Enrollment Specialist (which the ASC Coordinator and the Academic Center Program Assistants play)
    - Drawing a clear line between the duties of an Advisor and an Enrollment Specialist has been a long learning process and has been one of the primary ways that the ineffectiveness of the organizational structure was highlighted. Though there are a few common categories of student issues that front line staff contend with regularly, there are infinitely many variations and without a shared, guttural understanding of the essence of Advising and what makes something an Advising task and what makes something not an Advising task, three different supervisors, naturally often interpreted things three different ways. This has improved but hiring additional people who are able to do both sets of duties eliminates the need to distinguish between them. **(See Attachment I)**
    - Another benefit to hiring additional Counselors is to distribute workloads more evenly, in the Summer especially. The Summer is the busiest time for Onboarding new students. It is also the time that Program Advisors are not working. Therefore, in addition to managing the Onboarding process for all incoming Summer and Fall students and Onboarding the largest share of them myself, I was also the only available Advisor for all students in the Summer. Summer is also the prime time for SAP appeals and for advice-seeking Spring students that left in May unsure of what they wanted to do. I regularly assisted at least 20 students a day in the Summer many of whom needed Onboarding or a SAP appeal, or significant advising that takes an hour, on average. The Admissions Counsellor's role was changed to Enrollment Counsellor and she has been taking on more and more Advising duties as well. That has already begun to help and adding additional staff members with Advising abilities will continue to improve things

dramatically on this front.

- There is no longer a position titled Coordinator of Advising. My role is now the Director of Onboarding and Student Success. This change in classification change has the potential to improve the organizational structure but also to provide some additional questions that are going to need to be addressed.
  - There are two benefits to this new classification. The first one being that there will be at least one staff member that reports directly to me which will mean I am no longer a team of one. There are staff members that know that I always have projects started that I do not have time to get to and they check in with me when their jobs are slow and see if there is anything they can work on. That has been super helpful, and I appreciate that very much. However, being able to work with someone on a project without having to either wait for them to offer or pitch the project to their supervisor first will make things more efficient.
  - The second benefit is that this classification more specifically defines and names my primary responsibility as being rooted in Student Affairs, Onboarding and Student Success. As I have mentioned, Advising touches all the college but, specifically, it is very evenly split between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. That is part of the reason for the cluttered organizational structure. The staff responsibilities as Enrollment Specialists fall pretty squarely in line with Student Affairs but the Program Advisors are Faculty that are guiding their students with their expertise in their academic area, putting them squarely in the realm of Academic Affairs. As Coordinator of Advising, I reported to the VP of Student Affairs and the primary reason for the position was to implement Onboarding which is, at its core, a Student Affairs process but the name that the position was given was Coordinator of Advising, which implies that my role was to coordinate the activities of the Program Advisors whose job falls solidly in Academic Affairs. This caused a lot of confusion and some animosity.
  - The one issue I see in these changes is, given the increased number of staff counsellors in the Student Affairs department and the fact that my new position pulls me further in to that department as well, by increasing my role in other support services, who is actually tasked with "coordinating the advisors"? The role I have now is far closer to what the former ASC Coordinator and I pitched to the Leadership Team when we first approached them with the idea of Onboarding. We had envisioned this as a way to hand students off to their Advisors in a way that was more personal, individualized and, ultimately, more effective and efficient. At the same time, creating a connection with incoming students to make it easier and more likely for them to access the support services available to them when they need them. Our vision was very clearly rooted in Student Affairs. However, in my role as the Coordinator of Advising, and talking to Program Advisors about how they see their jobs and what kind of support they needed. I realized that there really is also a great need for support and coordination for Program Advisors. I have done my best to provide that support, in addition to implementing the Onboarding process that I had envisioned but more is definitely needed, and my role is supposed to be moving in a different direction. I am not sure what the solution is here, but I feel that it needs to be addressed, Program Advisors need additional support.

2. Analyze the program staffing and discuss the impacts on the program. Is there a need for a change in staffing? If so, describe the changes needed and, where possible, provide data that highlight the need.

As mentioned above, adding counselors to the program is a very positive staffing change that will take effect when vacant positions are filled. In addition to the ASC Coordinator and Accessibilities Coordinator positions that we need to fill, there are also two part-time positions with the ASC that have been vacant for a long time, one of which has been vacant for 2 years. We are hoping that we will be able to fill those positions as well, which would also be very helpful.

3. Describe the collaboration and lines of communication that are necessary for the success of the program. Is there any need for improvement?

The two biggest roadblocks to collaboration and communication are

- The unclear organization structure described above
- Time – I do my best to keep everyone connected but, most of the time, by the time I have a minute to connect with people, most of them have gone home for the day. I would love more time to have regularly scheduled meetings and retreat-like sessions for collaboration and communication. I am hopeful that we may be able to do that once we are fully staffed in Student Affairs

Despite the difficulties, I do think the staff communicate and collaborate well. Though we are not able to have regularly scheduled meetings, we do communicate individually and in groups a lot. I do think that the communication and collaboration between faculty and staff is sometimes less open. I communicate a lot with most Program Advisors. I believe most of them feel very comfortable coming to me for support, especially technical or logistical support. Though this has decreased tremendously as we have had new Program Advisors join us, some Advisors didn't see my role the way I did. I felt I was there to support Program Advisors. Having always been a faculty member in the past, my perspective was that, as faculty, paperwork, logistics, and the newest miracle technology, all placed a very distant second to excellent delivery of academic content in the race to my attention. Therefore, my vision was that having someone there to help with those annoyances would be helpful. I think that some faculty somehow got the impression that my role was to change what they were doing, and I do not think I had enough control over my own narrative to keep that from happening. Therefore, communication has been strained at times with some departments. As I said, however, that has improved drastically, partially just due to time and partially due to changes and additions to the Program Advising team.

a. Are there structures in place that allow for members of this service's team to communicate and collaborate freely?

I think there are. I have a Teams chat group with all Program Advisors and one with all Enrollment Specialists and one with the Outreach Team that helps the students make appointments with Enrollment Specialists and Advisors. The resources outlined in **Attachment C** are accessible through each of these chats. I would like to work on engaging people more in these conversations but, again, there are only 24 hours in a day. However, I do think the structure is in place and for the most part we communicate pretty well

b. What other programs, professional workgroups, or community partnerships are integral to the success of this program?

Every program in the college is integral to the success of this program. We work with Financial Services, Academic Affairs, The Academic Success Center, Accessibility Services, the College Counsellor, The Bookstore, the Library, and we are part of every single academic program.

For professional workgroups…

- I am part of the system-wide EAB work group. It is a huge help to hear the problems and solutions that people in similar positions throughout the system have had.
- Many programs have Advisory Boards which help guide the Program Coordinator

4. Does the program have purposeful policies and procedures in place that ensure that it functions in a legal and ethical manner?

I feel that, like in all areas, we are still working on documentation of specific policies. The legal and ethical considerations that we face the most relate to confidentiality. We are all very aware of FERPA and try our best to be diligent in protecting privacy, but I do think it would be extremely helpful to have some training in that regard, especially when it comes to students the ADA and students with disabilities. Coordinating support for students with disabilities can be very tricky. For instance, I once had a tutor that was a bit upset because I had not given a little more warning about what to expect with a student before meeting with her, but I wasn't able to do that without disclosing information that it is not my place to disclose. College-wide training on these topics, I think would be very helpful

a. What services inherently involve potential for legal or ethical complications?

Pretty much all of the services provided in Advising have that potential because Advising involves interacting with students in a way that necessitates learning a bit about their lives, thereby providing you with information and you have to determine when, where, how, and with whom it is appropriate to share that information.

b. Are there clear and widely understood best practices indicating how to manage these potential complications?

I was going to say that, like many other things we are trying to get documented, this is a work in progress but I think I am going to come right out and answer - no. Other than some large, obvious policies, like do not speak to anyone outside the college about a student without first checking to see if there is a Release of Information on file that allows you to do so, we do not have clearly documented policies. Using reasonable judgement and the knowledge of the larger policies gets us through most things but, in Advising, we often operate in gray areas and small things that you might not think about come up. In the moment, it is sometimes difficult to know exactly how to handle them. Having additional training and more documentation would be helpful.

## Section V: Infrastructure

1. Does this program have a budget? If so, please attach it. Are there financial needs that are met through other program budgets? Are there financial needs that are going unmet?

The Advising program does not have its own budget. Some of the Program Advisors have budgets for their programs, however, typically that money would not go directly toward Advising. We do rely on the infrastructure already present in the college. Therefore, most of what we use comes from some other budget. The one need that I feel goes unmet in this program is training. So far, I have had to, assess what is needed, propose the policies and procedures, get buy-in and approval, document the policies and procedures, and train everyone that is carrying out the new processes, while also carrying the largest portion of the direct contact with students. Therefore, any training I can do myself is minimal and procedural, for the most part. There are some types of training that I would love to have for Enrollment Specialists and Advisors but, without a budget, am unable to bring in trainers. There are some things I could probably find a way to do with Professional Development money but, to be honest, I am just really not sure what is and isn't available to me. Some examples of things I feel would be beneficial…

- NACADA membership for Enrollment Specialists and Program Advisors
- Northeast Region NACADA conference
- General training on the different theories of advising
- A workshop on Trauma-informed Advising – This is something I feel strongly about. I honestly don't even know if there is training out there specific to advising but there is a lot of information about Trauma-informed counselling, education, and medical care and the concept really applies to advising as well. The population that we serve has a high percentage of students that have strong negative reactions to stress; they retreat, get defensive, and some even lash out. These are all signs of defense mechanisms that have been acquired likely from some level of trauma. Understanding how best to respond to students in these situations is crucial but even more important, in my opinion, is learning to approach all our daily interactions in such a way as to avoid these reactions whenever possible.

2. How is technology utilized in delivering the services of the program? Are there additional technology needs for this program? If so, describe the technology needed and provide data that highlights the need.

We are, really, very well equipped in terms of computers, webcams, and all the other basic technological equipment that is needed to do our jobs. We also have platforms that make our lives so much easier, Navigate, in particular. Navigate allows us to have so much information about our students right in one place. Additionally, it facilitates communication with students, academic planning and registration for students, scheduling of appointments, and the sharing of information about a student's progress. It really is an extremely useful tool. There are even parts of Navigate that we could utilize more than we do. The platform is also always improving and adding features. There are things that I would like to see improved and features that I would like added but we stay in close contact with our EAB representative and he is able to help us customize the platform whenever possible and take our feedback back to EAB. We have bi-weekly, system-wide Navigate meetings which he attends. I feel that the company is very attentive to what we need and they work to address any issues or suggestions

we have.
Another platform that is very helpful in Advising is DegreeWorks. Navigate is set up to help with Academic Planning but is not a Degree Audit tool. DegreeWorks is. There is work in progress to integrate DegreeWorks into Navigate which would make our lives even easier but, even, as it is, those two tools, really, provide everything needed to advise students. We are really lucky to have them.

3. How adequate and appropriate are the program facilities and equipment? How could facilities and their use be improved?

Onboarding and Advising appointments can be done in person or via phone or Zoom. They also typically require the student to have computer access as well. We have adequate technology and equipment to conduct these appointments. One small thing that might be helpful is additional phone headsets. An onboarding appointment is typically around 45 minutes and for some students can take over an hour. Other Advising appointments vary widely. Though they probably average less than 30 minutes, some more involved meetings can be much longer. The call quality is better on a phone headset than by having the phone on speakerphone and it is a lot more comfortable than holding the phone during that time especially if you have four or five appointments that day.

"Facilities", on the other hand, is an area that could use some improvement, in some cases. This is particularly true for the Enrollment Specialists in North Conway and part-time Program Coordinators who do not have an office. The primary purpose of Onboarding and Advising meetings is to make a connection with a student and learn a little bit about their lives and how WMCC can fit into those lives. Therefore, at times we have very personal conversations. For Enrollment Specialists and Program Advisors that do not have a private space to conduct the meeting, this can be uncomfortable for the student, potentially to the point that they do not share information that would be useful for us in helping the student create a plan. This is not a huge problem; everyone does their best to find as private a setting as possible and, typically, on the Berlin campus, there is an empty classroom that can be used and often private spaces in the Library as well, but it is something that is not ideal.

- This problem is exacerbated when we have multiple students needing appointments at the same time which illustrates one of the primary reasons that I believe it is best that Onboarding be separate from Orientation. It has been difficult to change the culture and the expectation from registration numbers that spike at the time of Orientation to the slow and steady pace of registration under the new Onboarding process. However, I feel that we have shown that it works and that there is no need to link Onboarding to Orientation **(See Attachment J)**. This would allow for Orientation to be used more to get students excited about their program.
- One way I hope to alleviate the problem on the Berlin campus is to find ways to encourage Program Advisors that need a space to start feeling comfortable using space in the Academic Success Center and Library. The Library currently has private rooms that can be signed out and there are plans for construction in both the Library and the ASC which should allow us to offer even more private spaces for meeting with students
- The North Conway Academic Center is simply short on space so I am not sure there is a solution there other than strategic scheduling to allow conversations to happen at times that there are empty rooms that can be used. There have been discussions about keeping the one smallest classroom free as a conference area, that could not only be used by Enrollment Specialists and Advisors but also for the

Accessibility Services Coordinator, College Counselor, and ASC tutors to meet with students when needed. I am not certain, but it seems that it might be possible to schedule classes there in such a way as to make that possible. I think it is worth further discussion.

## Section VI: Program Review Summary

### Identify:

1. **Major Program Strengths**
    a. Creating connections with students
    b. Making processes more efficient and effective
    c. Making guidance and support more accessible to students
    d. Helping students mitigate damage and maximize potential when making decisions

2. **Program Weaknesses or Needs for Improvement**
    a. Organizational structure
    b. Lack of time for training, collaboration, and completing documentation of policies
    c. Data collection and assessment

3. **Opportunities for Program Development or Growth**
    a. Student Task Management Guides
    b. Student Services workshops and Canvas page
    c. Training and collaboration around theories of advising
    d. Creation of an assessment plan with specific metrics and goals

**Program Representative:** Signature____________________ Date 05/05/22

## Attachments

**A)** **Student Task Management Guide for "Getting Setup"** – Section I
**B)** **Template Advising Check-in Note** – Section I
**C)** **Student Task List** – Section II

The folders for resources are housed in the DC/PC Team under Advising Resources and shared as needed with Enrollment Specialist and Outreach Team Members. The goal is to have each folder contain a Student Task Management Guide and a folder of Faculty/Staff Resources and a folder of Student Resources, each of which contain documents as well as links. There is a partially completed outline of what will be covered in each main folder.

**D)** **Advisor Responsibility List** – Section II

This list was created by the VPAA and VPSA and distributed to Program Coordinators in December of 2020

**E)** **Alert Response Rates** – Section II
**F)** **Academic Affairs Notice** – Section II
**G)** **Student Services Canvas Page Example: SAP Appeals** – Section II
**H)** **Spring 2022 – Fall 2022 Retention Data** – Section III

This is a snapshot as of 4/28/22. The students we are tracking are Matriculated Spring students who did not file an Intent to Graduate form

**I)** **Why Registration Isn't Advising** – Section IV

This is not an official document. This is something that I shared with the VPAA, VPSA, and the Director of the Academic Centers in June of 2021 to explain my view of the difference between Advisors and Enrollment Specialists due to lingering differences of opinion

**J)** **Registration Data Comparison** – Section V

This data came from the Institutional Researcher in August 2021.