

## First Year Professional Academic Advising

### I. Advising Mission, Values, and Commitments

The following mission, values, and commitments are shared across the institution’s advising program, from the student’s first year through graduation and beyond:

**Mission Statement**

Academic advisement serves to inspire, motivate, and support all students in their academic and professional goals as they develop as members of the Buffalo State community and transition to being active alumni leaders of a diverse society.

**Values Statement**

The values associated with advising at SUNY Buffalo State resonate with the values of the college.

Academic Advising exemplifies the profitable learning that can occur outside of the classroom and the fulfillment that is found in intellectual discovery.

<p><b>Access</b> We are committed to offering accurate, purposeful advising to help all students develop meaningful academic and career plans that address their goals in a timely manner.</p>	<p><b>Diversity</b> We respect the individuality of our students. Advising services are available in a variety of ways that meet the diverse needs of our campus populations and help individuals realize their full potential.</p>
<p><b>Service to Society</b> We foster habits required for critical thinking and social awareness so that students make informed choices consistent with their academic, career and life goals.</p>	<p><b>Integrity</b> We seek to build meaningful academic relationships between advisers and students in a process that demonstrates a commitment to professional ethics and moral integrity, and that thereby affords students the opportunity for self-reflection and authentic inquiry.</p>

**Buffalo State Undergraduate Academic Advising Commitments**

Academic Advising at Buffalo State reflects the college’s strategic position as a transformational learning environment focused on student success. Academic advisers and students at SUNY Buffalo State share responsibility for quality academic advisement. Students must commit to taking responsibility for

actively, regularly, and honestly engaging with their academic advisers to develop their personal and professional plans. SUNY Buffalo State will:

- Provide students with advisers who care for students' experiences, respect their life choices and plans, and serve as advocates when problems need resolution.
- Mentor students as they explore and clarify their values, educational path, career plans, and life goals.
- Offer timely information and accurate guidance about degree requirements, extra-curricular educational activities and research opportunities, policies, and procedures to assist students in navigating and maximizing their college experience.
- Guide students to maximize academic success, complete graduation requirements in a timely manner, and transition smoothly to future academic or professional work.

## II. Structure: First Year Advising Plan

Buffalo State College's First Year Advising Plan includes **three mandatory interactions** between the student and their professional adviser in the Academic Commons that begin before the student arrives on campus and continue throughout the student's first year.

In a welcoming and caring way advisers make every attempt to conduct additional outreach to students. When needed advisers connect with individual students for further conversations as requested by the student and/or signaled by early alerts in Bengal Success Portal (BSP) and key indicators from the Buffalo Noel-Levitz College Success Inventory (CSI). The three mandatory meeting detailed in this plan, however, provide a minimum baseline to ensure that all students achieve the outcomes set forth in the advising plan.

## III. Assessment Plan:

### ORIENTATION: Goal and Support Outcomes

#### Goal

To educate first-year students about the purpose of academic advising.

#### **Support Outcomes**

- 1- After attending orientation, students will be able to explain the role of an academic adviser and their responsibilities as a student
- 2- After attending orientation, students will know how to use Bengal Success Portal to schedule appointments with their advisor

#### **Measures and Criteria:** *(Using survey data, this year we will establish a baseline)*

- 1- Percentage of students that can explain the role of an academic adviser and their responsibilities as a student
- 2- Percentage of students that know how to schedule registration appointment with their adviser using Bengal Success Portal

**FIRST YEAR ADVISING: Goals and Support Outcomes****Goal A**

To educate first-year students about the basic purpose and value of a liberal arts education.

**Support Outcomes**

- 1- Students will be able to articulate components of academic roadmap for their degree program (includes: Intellectual Foundations, major courses, electives)
- 2- Students will be able to articulate their academic goals (includes: short-term and long-term goals)
- 3- Student will understand the purpose of transition to faculty adviser

**Measures and Criteria:** *(Using survey data, this year we will establish a baseline)*

- 1- Percentage of students that can articulate components of academic roadmap for their degree program (includes: Intellectual Foundations, major courses, electives)
- 2- Percentage of students that can articulate their academic goals (includes: short-term and long-term goals)
- 3- Percentage of students that understands the purpose of transition to faculty adviser

**Goal B**

To ensure first-year students can independently navigate Buffalo State's technology relevant to academic progress.

**Support Outcomes**

- 1- Students will know how to check their grades in Banner
- 2- Students will be able to use Schedule Planner in Banner to independently register for courses
- 3- Students will be able to interpret their Degree Works audit sheet
- 4- Students will be able to navigate Bengal Success Portal

**Measures and Criteria:** *(Using survey data, this year we will establish a baseline)*

- 1- Percentage of students that know how to check their grades in Banner
- 2- Percentage of students that know how to use Schedule Planner in Banner to independently register for courses
- 3- Percentage of students that know how to interpret their Degree Works audit sheet
- 4- Percentage of students that know how to navigate Bengal Success Portal

**Goal C**

To assist first-year students in understanding key components of academic progress.

**Support Outcomes**

- 1- Students will be aware of important academic dates
- 2- Students will be able to articulate academic standards and policies
- 3- Students will be able to articulate their plan for success (includes: study habits, support services needed)

**Measures and Criteria:** *(Using survey data, this year we will establish a baseline)*

- 1- Percentage of students that are aware of important academic dates
- 2- Percentage of students that can articulate academic standards
- 3- Percentage of students that can articulate their plan for success (includes: study habits, support services needed)

## Step by Step Plan

### IV. First Year Advising Interaction Practices and Protocol

#### NEW FIRST-TIME STUDENT ACADEMIC ONBOARDING PROCESS

##### New Student Step 1: Accept Offer of Admission

The student signals their intent to enroll in their first semester by paying their tuition deposit (in some cases it is waived) and signing the Intent to Enroll Form. The student is now referred to as an “acknowledged” student.

##### New Student Step 2: Complete Necessary Tasks to Be Eligible to Register for Classes

The student must sign up for orientation and submit all health and immunization forms required by the Weigel Health Center.

Once a student has completed those tasks, they receive email and text communications instructing them to set up an appointment with their assigned academic adviser for a pre-registration phone appointment.

##### New Student Step 3: Participate in Summer Orientation

During orientation, all students participate in a summer orientation workshop facilitated by advising staff in the Academic Commons workshop.

By the end of the advising session at orientation, students should be able to:

- Identify their academic adviser.
- Explain the role of the adviser and the student in the advising relationship.
- Use the Bengal Success Portal to schedule appointments and ask for help.
- If the student does not schedule an advising appointment in a timely manner after orientation, the adviser will reach out to the student to schedule one.

**First Mandatory Advising Interaction: Pre-Registration in Summer**

<u>*What will the student know after this session?</u>	<u>How Should the Adviser Prepare?</u>	<u>How Should the Student Prepare?</u>
<p>By the end of this interaction, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of the components of a degree program, including: the college’s Intellectual Foundation requirements, major requirements, and electives</li> <li>• Explain what courses they must take and would like to take in their first term, and why</li> <li>• Identify the dates of the add/drop period, in case they need to make schedule changes</li> <li>• Know where to find their schedule of classes</li> <li>• Encourage initial thought of short-term goals and/or long-term goals relevant to their education (<i>if time permits</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Advisers should prepare for this meeting by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening the student appointment in Bengal Success Portal in order to take notes while talking</li> <li>• Reviewing the student’s demographic information in Bengal Success Portal (housing status, first-generation status, financial aid status, etc.)</li> <li>• Identifying any special programs in which the student is participating (EOP, Honors, Athletics, Say Yes, International Programs, etc.)</li> <li>• Reviewing the student’s AP and SAT scores and high school transcript</li> <li>• Reviewing the student’s responses to any pre-orientation surveys</li> </ul>	<p>Students should prepare by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring they have a quiet place and enough time allocate for a half-hour phone conversation</li> <li>• Reflecting on their past academic experiences, including strengths and challenges</li> <li>• Reflecting on what they hope to achieve in college</li> <li>• Reviewing the Intellectual Foundations section of the college website</li> </ul>

\*NOTE: Some students may need more than one meeting to cover all topics.

Pre-Registration Conversation Process

**Step 1: Get Ready**

The adviser should begin reviewing all the student information listed above and open the appointment in the Bengal Success Portal in order to document recommendations in real time. Make sure to mark “send a copy of this note to student” when documenting case notes, and remember that strong, comprehensive case notes allow others on campus to more fully understand the student’s situation.

**Step 2: Make Introductions**

When the adviser calls the student, they should begin by introducing themselves and the purpose of the pre-registration appointment. They should explain the purpose of advising, as outlined in the mission, their responsibilities as an adviser, and the student's responsibilities as an advisee.

### **Step 3: Ask Questions**

Confirm that the student is still interested in the major they indicated on their application. If not, explain the process for a major change.

#### *Questions to Ask:*

- How do you feel about your last academic experience (*typically, high school*)? What were some of your strengths and challenges as a student?
- Have you ever heard the term "liberal arts education"? What do you think the purpose of a liberal arts education might be?
  - Explain in brief. This is a good lead-in to explaining IF requirements and the tripartite structure of a Buffalo State degree.
- (*After explaining the courses on the major block*): Do you have any questions about your major courses for this semester?
- (*After explaining Intellectual Foundations requirements*): Which of the IF '14 areas would you like to focus on completing in your first semester?
  - Describe any IF areas or specific courses recommended or required by the student's department for their first semester.
  - If the student has questions about any of the IF areas, explain the types of classes that fall under that area. Emphasize that the student has many choices, and this is a great opportunity for them to explore new interests and discover new strengths.
- What might you have going on outside of class that might impact your ability to succeed in class (examples: job, family commitments, athletics, clubs, etc.)?
- Explain that the student's Buffalo State email is the official mode of communication for the college and that they should be checking it regularly. Ask if they have set up their email and their student accounts and send them the link for new student account setup.

### **Step 4: Register the Student for Classes**

Once the adviser has conducted the pre-registration appointment, they should register the student for classes according to the student's academic roadmap as well as the requirements for any special program that they are participating in (e.g., Honors, learning communities, etc.). The adviser should then fill the remainder of the schedule with Intellectual Foundations requirements that the student expressed interest in, keeping in mind any outside demands on the student (e.g., practice times for athletes, work schedules, commuter/residential status, etc.). Inform students about add/drop option.

Once the student has been registered, the adviser should send a note through Bengal Success Portal that the schedule is available to view in Banner (see template).

## **FIRST TERM TIMELINE**

### **Week 1 - 2:**

Advisers will:

- Send a welcome message to all assigned advisees through Bengal Success Portal and offer themselves as a resource (see template)

- Remind students about add/drop option and assist students during Drop/Add with any necessary schedule adjustments
- Continually review student schedules to ensure all students have 15 credits (where appropriate)
- Advisers will continue to assist students through the Late Add process

**Week 3 - 5:**

Results from the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI) and the Bengal Success Portal Progress Report should be available by Week 3 or 4. On an ongoing basis, Advisers will:

- Review CSI reports for students on their caseload, who are not in a specialty cohort with additional support services, and identify students in need of extra help based on the feedback given from the faculty progress survey results
- Intervene with students as signaled by flags in the Bengal Success Portal according to established protocol

Advisers should cross-reference information available on students through these tools to identify which students are struggling most early on and target their interventions accordingly.

**Week 6 - 7 of First Term:**

At the beginning of Week 6, advisers will send a message to students reminding them to design a time management plan to prepare for midterms and offering themselves (and tutoring) as a resource. They should include a reminder about the Pass/Fail and Course Withdraw deadline (see template).

During this time, advisers will continue to address flags and meet with students as needed.

**Week 8 - 15:**

At the beginning of Week 8, instructors will begin to report midterm grades. Over weeks 8 – 10, advisers should regularly assess midterm grades and reach out to students as needed, particularly if they have multiple low midterm grades. Advisers can use the midterm grade filter in the Bengal Success Portal to quickly identify students with low midterm grades.

If students do have low midterm grades and make an appointment to discuss them, advisers should help the students weigh their options, such as: should they take the course pass/fail (if permitted)? Should they withdraw, or have they spoken to their instructor and evaluated the remaining assignments to see if they can still salvage their grade? If salvaging their grade is possible, the adviser should recommend tutoring and enter a referral to tutoring services in the Bengal Success Portal.

At the beginning of Week 8, advisers should also contact all assigned advisees to set up advising appointments in the Bengal Success Portal for their second mandatory advising interaction (see below). During this time, advisers should also send another reminder about the Pass/Fail and Course Withdraw deadline (see template).

Throughout the remainder of the semester, advisers will be meeting with students to discuss spring registrations and to address academic concerns as they arise. As always, they will continue to check Bengal Success Portal for academic flags and provide proactive outreach.

**Second Mandatory Advising Interaction: Midterm Check / Registration for Spring Courses**

<u>*What will the student know after this session?</u>	<u>How Should the Adviser Prepare?</u>	<u>How Should the Student Prepare?</u>
<p>By the end of this interaction, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret their Degree Works audit sheet</li> <li>• Interpret the academic roadmap for their intended major</li> <li>• Give examples of the habits that helped them be academically successful and/or unsuccessful in their first term</li> <li>• Describe resources they have used (or will use) for assistance</li> <li>• Use Banner and Schedule Planner to register themselves for spring courses</li> <li>• Discuss any short-term academic goals for spring term</li> <li>• Explain a plan for success for the remainder of the semester, if needed.</li> </ul>	<p>Advisers should prepare for this meeting by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening the student appointment in Bengal Success Portal in order to take notes while talking</li> <li>• Reviewing the student’s demographic information in Bengal Success Portal, as well as any previous notes, meetings, referrals, or flags in the student’s folder</li> <li>• Reviewing the results of the student’s CSI</li> </ul>	<p>Students should prepare by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing their Degree Works audit sheet before the meeting</li> <li>• Reviewing their academic roadmap</li> <li>• Coming prepared to discuss academic goals and career interests</li> </ul>

*\*NOTE: Some students may need more than one meeting to cover all topics.*

Second Mandatory Interaction Process:

**Step 1: Get Ready**

See “how should the adviser prepare” above.

**Step 2: Ask Questions**

Ask the following questions to each advisee:

- How do you feel classes are going? What kinds of grades are you getting in class assignments? (Compare their answers to their midterm grades and flags.)
  - Recommend tutoring as appropriate and remind them to meet with their instructors during office hours.



- How many hours are you spending outside of class for every hour you spend in class? (Remind them that research indicates the most successful students must spend 2-3 hours outside of class for every hour spent in class.)
  - Follow up: Do you have a job? How many hours a week are you working? (Remind them that research suggests they should work no more than 15 hours a week if they are a full-time student)
- Have you missed any classes? Why?
- What opportunities have you explored at Buffalo State to make the most of your time here?
  - Have you visited the Career Development Center? (This is especially important for undeclared students.)
  - Possible recommendations: academic clubs, SLE clubs and organizations, campus events, on-campus work opportunities (recommend ORCA), study abroad and national student exchange, early undergraduate research, service-learning opportunities.

### **Step 3: Review College Systems and Requirements**

Make sure to cover the following:

- Demonstrate and explain the Degree Works audit and the What-If feature
- Demonstrate how to search and register for classes in Banner
- Explain how to cross-reference the academic roadmap with Degree Works

### **Step 4: Discuss Spring Courses with the Student**

Ask the student the following:

- Do you feel your major is a good fit? (Look at midterm grades as a potential early indicator.) If not, talk through other interests and recommend that they visit the Career Development Center.
- How do you feel about the classes you are taking this term? What do you like / dislike about each?
- Have you considered a minor, any concentrations, or any other areas of study you would like to explore?

Based on the student's answers, as well as the requirements specified in their academic roadmap, make recommendations for courses they should register for during spring term.

### **Step 5: Document**

Document the conversation, your recommendations, and case notes in the Bengal Success Portal, and send a copy of the note to the student. Remember that the more complete your case notes are, the easier it will be for the student and anyone else who is helping them. Be sure to include the student's advising PIN in this message.

Make referrals within Bengal Success Portal to tutoring services, Career Development, and Residence Life as appropriate.

## **AFTER THE FIRST TERM ENDS**

As soon as grades become available, advisers should:

- Review the AcadAdmin report daily to evaluate their advisees who may be placed on academic warning, academic probation, or may be academically dismissed
- Be available to students to help them during the petition process, if appropriate

- Reach out to students who are placed on academic probation to assist them in making schedule adjustments as necessary (keeping the implications of academic advising for financial aid eligibility in mind – see Appendix)
- For students who are on academic warning / academic probation, highlight what students did well in the previous semester and what they might do differently in the coming semester to improve their chances at success, using a growth mindset approach. Develop and academic plan with the student and have all students sign a probation contract.
- Use Bengal Success Portal to evaluate students between a 2.0 and a 2.5. Could they use any additional help?

## SECOND TERM TIMELINE

### **Week 1 - 2:**

Advisers will:

- Send a welcome message to all assigned advisees through Bengal Success Portal and remind them that you are here to help (see template)
- Remind students about add/drop option and assist students during Drop/Add with any necessary schedule adjustments
- Continually review student schedules to ensure all students have 15 credits (where appropriate)
- Advisers will continue to assist students through the Late Add process

### **Week 3 - 5:**

Using results from the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI) and the Bengal Success Portal Progress.

Advisers will:

- Prioritize student follow-up by reviewing previous CSI reports for students on their caseload and identify students in need of extra help now that there are stronger relationships built from the first semester
- Connect with students who require additional intervention by reaching out to those who failed to follow through with student success plans, have poor academic standing, require additional reminders and/or check-ins and has demonstrated any area of high risk indicators that would require them to need additional support
- Intervene with students as signaled by flags in the Bengal Success Portal according to established protocol

Advisers should cross-reference information available on students through these tools to identify which students are struggling most early on and target their interventions accordingly.

### **Week 6 - 7 of First Term:**

At the beginning of Week 6, advisers will send a message to students reminding them to design a time management plan to prepare for midterms and offering themselves (and tutoring) as a resource. They should include a reminder about the Pass/Fail and Course Withdraw deadline (see template).

During this time, advisers will continue to address flags and meet with students as needed.

### **Week 8 - 15:**

At the beginning of Week 8, instructors will begin to report midterm grades. Over weeks 8 – 10, advisers should regularly assess midterm grades and reach out to students as needed, particularly if they have

multiple low midterm grades. Advisers can use the midterm grade filter in the Bengal Success Portal to quickly identify students with low midterm grades.

If students do have low midterm grades and make an appointment to discuss them, advisers should help the students weigh their options, such as: should they take the course pass/fail (if permitted)? Should they withdraw, or have they spoken to their instructor and evaluated the remaining assignments to see if they can still salvage their grade? If salvaging their grade is possible, the adviser should recommend tutoring and enter a referral to tutoring services in the Bengal Success Portal.

At the beginning of Week 8, advisers should also contact all assigned advisees to set up advising appointments in the Bengal Success Portal for their second mandatory advising interaction (see below). During this time, advisers should also send another reminder about the Pass/Fail and Course Withdraw deadline (see template).

Throughout the remainder of the semester, advisers will be meeting with students to discuss spring registrations and to address academic concerns as they arise. As always, they will continue to check Bengal Success Portal for academic flags and provide proactive outreach.

### Third/ Final Mandatory Advising Interaction: Midterm Check / Registration for Fall Courses

<u>*What will the student know after this session?</u>	<u>How Should the Adviser Prepare?</u>	<u>How Should the Student Prepare?</u>
<p>By the end of this interaction, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the process for transitioning to a faculty adviser</li> <li>• Give examples of the habits that helped them be academically successful and/or unsuccessful in their first year</li> <li>• Describe resources they have used (or will use) for assistance</li> <li>• Use Banner and Schedule Planner to register themselves for fall courses</li> <li>• Share any long-term goals for their college career or after graduation. <i>(Optional)</i></li> </ul>	<p>Advisers should prepare for this meeting by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening the student appointment in Bengal Success Portal in order to take notes while talking</li> <li>• Reviewing the student's demographic information in Bengal Success Portal, as well as any previous notes, meetings, referrals, or flags in the student's folder</li> <li>• Reviewing the results of the student's CSI</li> </ul>	<p>Students should prepare by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing their Degree Works audit sheet before the meeting</li> <li>• Reviewing their academic roadmap</li> <li>• Coming prepared to discuss academic goals and career interests</li> </ul>

\*NOTE: Some students may need more than one meeting to cover all topics.

### Third Mandatory Interaction Process:

#### **Step 1: Get Ready**

See “how should the adviser prepare” above.

#### **Step 2: Ask Questions**

Ask the following questions to each advisee:

- How do you feel classes are going? What kinds of grades are you getting in class assignments? (Compare their answers to their midterm grades and flags.)
  - Recommend tutoring as appropriate and remind them to meet with their instructors during office hours.
- How many hours are you spending outside of class for every hour you spend in class?
- Have you missed any classes? Why?
- What opportunities have you explored at Buffalo State to make the most of your time here?

#### **Step 3: Review College Systems and Requirements**

Make sure to cover the following:

- Show the student their progress so far in Degree Works
- Remind the student about the academic roadmap for their major and review their progress to date

#### **Step 4: Discuss Spring Courses with the Student**

Ask the student the following:

- Do you feel your major is a good fit? (Look at midterm grades as a potential early indicator.) If not, talk through other interests and recommend that they visit the Career Development Center.
- How do you feel about the classes you are taking this term? What do you like / dislike about each?
- Have you considered a minor, any concentrations, or any other areas of study you would like to explore?
- Congratulate the student on making it through most of their first year!

Based on the student’s answers, as well as the requirements specified in their academic roadmap, make recommendations for courses they should register for during spring term. Inform students that they will be reassigned to a faculty adviser by the academic department within their major, and remind them that you will be available over the summer should the student have any questions.

#### **Step 5: Document**

Document the conversation, your recommendations, and case notes in the Bengal Success Portal, and send a copy of the note to the student. Remember that the more complete your case notes are, the easier it will be for the student and anyone else who is helping them. Be sure to include the student’s advising PIN in this message.

Make referrals within Bengal Success Portal to tutoring services, Career Development, and Residence Life as appropriate.

**AFTER THE FIRST YEAR ENDS**

As soon as grades become available, advisers should:

- Review the AcadAdmin report daily to evaluate their advisees who may be placed on academic warning, academic probation, or may be academically dismissed
- Be available to students to help them during the petition process, if appropriate
- Reach out to students who are placed on academic probation to assist them in making schedule adjustments as necessary (keeping the implications of academic advising for financial aid eligibility in mind – see Appendix)
- For students who are on academic warning / academic probation, highlight what students did well in the previous semester and what they might do differently in the coming semester to improve their chances at success, using a growth mindset approach. Develop an academic plan with the student and have all students sign a probation contract.
- Use Bengal Success Portal to evaluate students between a 2.0 and a 2.5. Could they use any additional help?

For students who are not dismissed, advisers should send a message to students congratulating them on completing their first year and reminding them of the process for transitioning to a faculty adviser.

PILOT 2020-2021