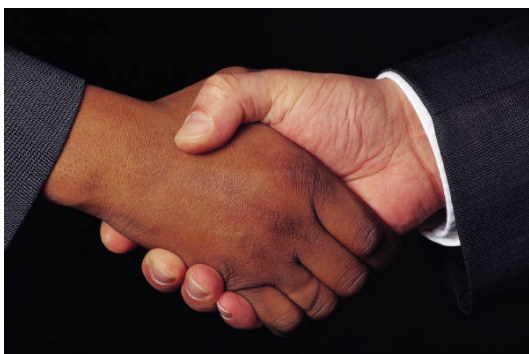




## Advising Center News

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## **Director of Undergraduate Advising to Facilitate Articulation Agreement Updates**

David Goss, Director of Undergraduate Advising, has recently taken on the responsibility for ensuring that articulation agreements between WCU and North Carolina Community College's are current. Articulation agreements offer students attending NCCC's clear guidance on what credits will transfer, how they will apply to WCU requirements, and what courses they will have remaining to complete a WCU degree. Because students are making critical decisions about their academic careers based on the information in these agreements, it is crucial that they be current and correct.

The process for initiating new articulation agreements along with the bi-annual update schedule is defined in APR-22. APR-22 was revised and updated spring 2010. Among the key revisions put in place was a more clearly defined process for initiating new agreements as well as a common template, inclusion of the academic Dean's in the approval process to ensure that the agreements are fully supported by the College in which the agreement will be housed, and assignment of the update process to the Director of Undergraduate Advising.

The update process is well underway with the goal of updating all existing agreements by the end of the spring semester. Once the agreements have been updated, a comprehensive list will be published to the WCU website so that they can be accessed by NCCC transfer counselors and students interested in transferring to WCU to complete their baccalaureate degree.

Questions about articulation agreements can be directed to David at [dgoss@email.wcu.edu](mailto:dgoss@email.wcu.edu) or 227-3814.



## **What's New in the Catamount Gateway?**

The Catamount Gateway serves as a virtual One Stop for students who have applied to WCU, allowing them to check their admission status and to access a timeline that guides them through the steps that must be completed prior to arriving on campus as an enrolled student. Introduced in fall of 2008, the Gateway was an immediate success.

When introduced, the Gateway improved the student experience by providing them easy access to their admission status and a step-by-step guide to completing required tasks. It also reduced significantly the printing and mailing costs for the Office of Admissions. Information that formerly required multiple mailings and follow up by admissions counselors and other University staff was now accomplished through the Gateway. Students are directed to the Gateway in their receipt of application

letter and once logged on, students have 24/7 access to the information they need.

Two major updates have been made to the Gateway since its introduction. Both of these updates offer an improved experience for new students as well as additional savings to the University through reduced printing and mailing costs.

The first major update to the Gateway was the addition of a link to the online payment portal. On this page, students can pay their application fee, make their tuition and housing deposits, pay for their meal plan, and make their Orientation payment. They can even add cash to their cat card once they have received it at their mandatory Orientation session. This is very convenient for new applicants because they can pay multiple fees in one place at the same time. This in turn reduces the number of mailings both paper and electronic required to make sure these payments are made in advance of critical deadlines.

The next major update was introduced this spring and is one we are very excited about. Students can now click a link to view their financial aid information. On this page they see what forms and steps have been completed and what they may have outstanding. They can then act on those missing documents quickly to complete the application process. Once awards have been made, they can view what type of financial aid they will receive and in what amount. Cost savings for the Financial Aid office are significant through reductions in the amount of printing and mailing required and in more efficient use of staff time.

The Catamount Gateway, along with the pre-orientation web application CatWalk, was showcased at the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) annual conference October 2010 in Orlando Florida. Advising Center staff member Will

Shivers and former staff member Allen Taylor's presentation was very well received with several attendees expressing interest in developing similar applications at their institutions. Through a process of continual improvement the Catamount Gateway, and CatWalk, greatly improve the new student experience, save the institution time and money, and add distinction to WCU's reputation among our peers.



### **Academic Action and the WCU probation/suspension policy**

Academic Action is the process that determines a student's academic standing at the conclusion of each academic term. The process is run in the Registrar's Office after final grades have been submitted. The Advising Center works collaboratively with the RO by providing the letters and information sheets that are sent to students placed on academic probation or academic suspension. The Director of Undergraduate Advising also facilitates the appeals process for students placed on academic suspension.

The Undergraduate Catalog states that "A student's academic standing during any term is determined by the cumulative grade point average (GPA) earned on the total quality hours. To be in good academic standing, a GPA of 2.0 must be maintained. A student who is not in good academic standing is not eligible for graduation."

Students who are not in good academic standing will fall under one of the following policy statements, each taken from the Undergraduate Catalog.

Academic Probation for Continuing Students:

Continuing students are placed on academic probation when their cumulative WCU grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0. At the end of the term of academic probation, students must achieve one of the following:

- a. Raise the cumulative GPA to good standing (2.0), or
- b. Earn a minimum 2.30 GPA during the probationary term.

Failure to achieve one of the above academic criteria will result in academic suspension.

Academic Probation for First Semester Freshmen and New Transfers:

In addition to the above criteria, first semester freshmen and new transfer students who are placed on academic probation must meet specific guidelines in order to continue enrollment in the University.

First semester freshmen and new transfers who earn a cumulative GPA within the range of 1.0 to 1.999 at the end of their first semester may return to the University for their second semester only if they choose to participate in the Learning Contract program.

Learning Contract Program:

First semester freshmen and new transfers will be placed on academic probation if their GPA falls within the range of 1.0 to 1.999 at the end of their first semester. Students placed on academic probation with a cumulative GPA in this range at the end of their first semester must participate in the Learning Contract program during their second semester. Students who do not

choose this option are not eligible to continue enrollment in the University for one term. If readmitted after a lapse in enrollment, students are reminded that they will return to WCU under the general guidelines for academic probation.

The Learning Contract Program specifies that these students work closely with an academic advisor. The student and advisor will discuss academic performance issues, set realistic goals, and make the necessary plans to reach those goals. Students will be linked with the campus resources that can help them succeed. Follow-up contacts will occur throughout the semester.

When appropriate, students should use the University's grade replacement policy to improve their academic standing (excluding the First Year Seminar).

Additionally, these students must make at least a 2.30 GPA during their second semester or bring their cumulative grade point average to good standing (2.0).

Failure to achieve these guidelines will result in academic suspension.

The Learning Contract Program requires students to enroll in LC 101, a non-credit bearing course taught by staff from the Advising Center, Student Support Services, and other academic support offices. The course provides structure and continuity in working with students on academic performance issues, setting goals and creating plans to achieve them, and connecting students to campus resources. Students sign a Learning Contract Program contract that clearly states course expectations and students responsibility. The course is graded S or U and the grade will neither help nor harm the students GPA. However the Academic and Admission Appeals Board will take the grade into consideration should a student placed on academic suspension at the end of the term submit an appeal for reinstatement.

### Academic Suspension for Continuing Students:

Academic Suspension from the University will occur as a result of failing to meet the criteria specified while on academic probation.

Students placed on academic suspension are not eligible to enroll in the University for one semester. After a one-semester suspension, students may apply for readmission to the University. If readmitted, students will return on academic probation.

The semester of suspension is intended to provide students with time to carefully consider the reasons for academic difficulty, resolve problems, clarify educational goals, and improve academic skills. If a student attends another institution while on suspension, the student must have a minimum 2.0 GPA on all work attempted since their last enrollment at Western Carolina University. Students are reminded that grades made in transferred courses are not computed in the GPA calculation at Western Carolina University.

### Academic Suspension for First Semester Freshmen and New Transfers:

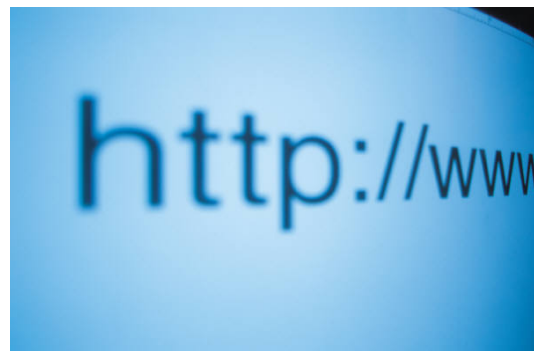
First semester freshmen and new transfers who earn a cumulative GPA below a 1.0 at the end of their first semester will be placed on academic suspension and will not be eligible to enroll in the University for one semester. After a one-semester suspension, students may apply for readmission to the University. If readmitted, students will return on academic probation.

### Appeal of Academic Suspension:

Appeals for reinstatement without having to serve a specified period of suspension are approved or denied by the Academic and Admission Appeals Board (referred to as "Board"). The Board's decision is final. The Board's decision is based upon the student's letter of appeal which includes the reason for poor academic performance,

documentation of extenuating circumstances, and a plan for rectifying the academic performance and raising the GPA to acceptable standards, as well as the student's previous academic history. Requests for reinstatement must be submitted to the Advising Center by the deadline stated in the academic suspension notification letter. Instructions for completing the request for reinstatement are included in the suspension notification letter. A student whose appeal for reinstatement is approved will be designated as "Suspended/Reinstated" on his or her academic record.

Students who are placed on academic suspension following the spring term have the option of enrolling in summer classes. If a student earns a summer GPA of 2.3 or better or raises their cumulative GPA to a 2.0, they are allowed to continue in the fall on academic probation. Currently students may take any number of hours to meet the GPA requirement. This standard is under review by the University Advising Council and the Academic and Admission Appeals Board to determine whether it is serving the intended purpose. An update on the results of that review will be published when available.



### **Advising Center to Host Webcasts**

The Advising Center will host two webcasts presented by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) this spring.

Each webcast is offered in support of faculty who advise and WCU staff who may wish to learn more about academic advising. In addition to offering the live webcast, the Advising Center will also purchase a DVD of the event that will be available for faculty and staff who are interested in this information but may not be able to attend during the live broadcast.

*For more information about NACADA webinars and the presenters, please visit <http://nacada.ksu.edu/Webinars/index.htm>*

**Foundations of Academic Advising Series**  
***The Informational Component of Academic Advising: Policies, Procedures and Beyond***  
**Thursday March 3, 2011**  
**2:00 – 3:30 pm in Killian Annex room 136**

Information and advising go hand-in-hand. Advisees rely on their advisors to provide information about their areas of study, important dates, graduation requirements, campus resources, and so on. There is, however, much more academic advisors need to know within the informational component of advising. As Linda Higginson notes, “The substantive information that academic advisors need to know falls in to four groups—the internal environment, the external environment, student needs, and advisor self-knowledge.” Join NACADA Vice President Kathy Stockwell (Fox Valley Technical College), Monograph Editor Julie Givans Voller (Arizona State University), and Publications Advisory Board Chair Maura Reynolds (Hope Colleges) as they explore in detail these four pieces of the informational pie, pieces that are critical to advisor effectiveness and student success.

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**Presenters:**

**Kathy Stockwell, Manager–Neenah Regional Center and Faculty Advising Coordinator, Fox Valley Technical College**  
**NACADA Vice President and President-Elect**

**Julie Givans Voller, Director of Academic Advising, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Arizona State University**  
**Lead Editor, NACADA Monograph 21: *Comprehensive Advisor Training and Development: Practices that Deliver***

**Maura Reynolds, Director of Academic Advising and Associate Professor of Latin, Hope College**  
**Chair, NACADA Publications Advisory Board**

**Academic Advising for Student Retention and Persistence Series**  
***Strategies for Increasing Advising Effectiveness with Decreasing Resources***  
**Wednesday April 27, 2011**  
**2:00 – 3:30 pm in Killian Annex room 136**

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising has identified the need to maximize our advising resources during challenging academic times. The term *innovation* is defined as “something new or different” which requires creativity and forward thinking. In this Webinar, NACADA Training and Development Commission Chair Nora Allen Scobie will be joined by Rebecca Ryan (University of Wisconsin) and Laura Pasquini (University of North Texas), and this highly *innovative* team will engage attendees in best practices and strategies to enhance retention issues and obtain student success through the utilization of effective group advising models, professional development practices and technology initiatives.

This broadcast will present innovative ideas and resources to get our creative juices flowing. Participants will learn about effective examples in the advising profession to enhance professional development, group advising and initiatives in technology during these uncertain times.

Objectives:

- Introduce effective strategies to increase retention and student success with minimal resources
- Share innovative tools for professional development, technology initiatives and group advising practices
- Explore practical advising plans to support your advising unit and staff during challenging times
- Learn about user-friendly, cost effective and accessible resources for advising staff on your campus

It is often the out of the box ideas that reinvigorate our advising practices and best support our students' success. Our Presenters will share a new perspective on staff development, technology and group advising that will provide attendees with insight on how to work smarter, not harder. Designed with administrators and advising staff in mind, Nora, Becky and Laura present this challenge: *In this day and age, is it possible for advisors to lead a managed and balanced work approach, and for administrators to not only support the concept, but to actually assist in making it happen?* Join us and find out!

**Presenters:**

**Nora Allen Scobie, Assistant Director of Advisor Development, University of Louisville  
Chair, Advisor Training and Development Commission**

**Rebecca Ryan, Associate Director, Cross-College Advising Service, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
NACADA Professional Development Committee Member**

**Laura Pasquini, Academic Advisor II, College of Business, University of North Texas  
NACADA Technology in Advising Steering Committee Member**



## **What's in the Advising Center Advisor Training Toolbox?**

Many WCU faculty and staff have participated in the Liberal Studies Workshops presented by Steve Baxley, Associate Director of the Advising Center. Designed to provide a better understanding of the Liberal Studies requirement at WCU along with advising tips and resources, these workshops are offered each semester in advance of Advising Day.

The Advising Center has also hosted several National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) webcasts that deal with advising issues and purchased DVD copies of the webcasts that are available to the campus community for advisor training and development.

The following webcasts are currently available in our library:

*Reaching and Retaining Students: Advising Students on Academic Probation*  
*Reaching and Retaining Students: Effective Academic Advising Strategies*  
*Breaking Bad News; Delivery Techniques that Help Students Make Good Choices*  
*The Role of Faculty Advisors in Student Success*

In addition to the webcasts we have the following Advisor Training DVDs. Both volumes include a variety of common advising scenarios played out by faculty,

staff, and students. Each scene includes several questions to help guide discussion after viewing. Advising Center staff is available to meet with interested faculty and staff to view and discuss any of the scenes included in volumes 1 and 2.

*Scenes for Learning and Reflection: An Academic Advising Professional Development DVD, vol. 1*

- Scene 1: Adult Returning to School
- Scene 2: Lack of Academic Progress
- Scene 3: Upset Transfer Student
- Scene 4: Advisor Error
- Scene 5: First Generation Student
- Scene 6: Student Complaint About a Professor
- Scene 7: Student With Personal Issues
- Scene 8: Student Athlete
- Scene 9: Faculty Advisor and Privacy issues
- Scene 10: Proactive Parenting (Helicopter mom)

*Scenes for Learning and Reflection: An Academic Advising Professional Development DVD, vol. 2*

- Scene 1: Peer Advising (Transfer student)
- Scene 2: Advising the High Achieving Student
- Scene 3: Student in Search of the Ideal Major (Student not wanting to graduate)
- Scene 4: Difficult Student Shopping for an Answer (Safety in the workplace)
- Scene 5: Probation Student Challenged to Set Academic Priorities
- Scene 6: Student Athlete returning after Academic Dismissal
- Scene 7: Group Advising and the Advising Syllabus
- Scene 8: Returning Veteran Facing Adjustment Issues
- Scene 9: Privacy Issue in Phone Advising
- Scene 10: Student Discloses Depression

Good academic advising is a key element in the QEP and we are happy to provide whatever support we can to faculty and staff across divisions to support student

success. Please contact David Goss, Director of Undergraduate Advising, with questions and for scheduling. He can be reached by email at [dgoss@email.wcu.edu](mailto:dgoss@email.wcu.edu) or phone, 227-3814.

