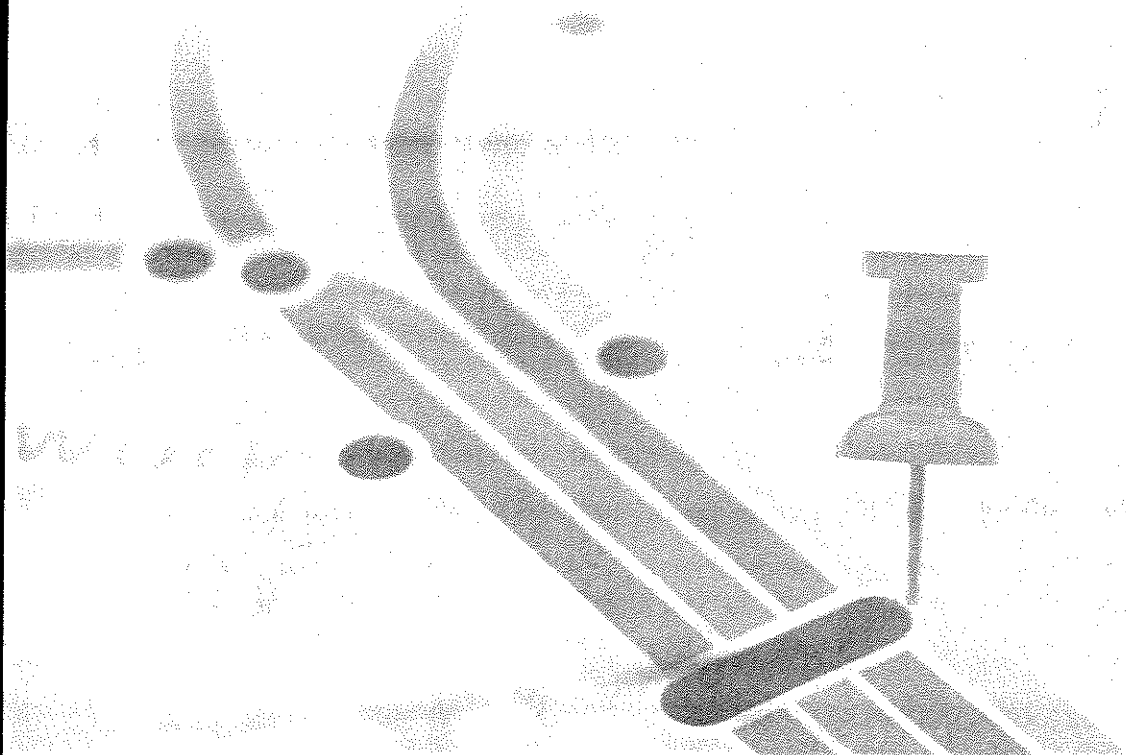


A Publication of the National Academic Advising Association

# THE HANDBOOK OF CAREER ADVISING



KENNETH F. HUGHEY, DOROTHY BURTON NELSON,  
JOANNE K. DAMMINGER, BETSY McCALLA-WRIGGINS, AND ASSOCIATES

Advising Center  
Staff - keep up the  
great work with your  
undeclared students!  
Cathy O'Connell

Advising Staff  
Thanks for contributing  
to the advising fund. Keep  
up the good work  
Betsey McCallister

Dear Advising  
How exciting that  
wonderful work of  
center is highlighted in  
Exemplary Practices! It is  
deserved & your work  
benefited thousands of  
students. Best wishes  
for the future,  
Thomas H. Dwyer

Advising Center -  
Thanks for your good  
work in facilitating students'  
success.  
That's wonderful!

Thanks for all you do  
for advising. Judy Mayhew

Advising Center -  
Keep up the good work  
of advising, counseling &  
mentoring students!  
Deann Jordan

Kutztown Advising  
Center

Thanks for being  
a star program!  
Patricia

Kutztown Advising Center -  
Thank you for sharing your  
knowledge with all of us.  
Karen H. Carlstrom

Kutztown Advising Center -  
congratulations on your  
contribution to this book  
and all of your great  
work with students  
Gina Pothlis

Your university  
has maintained a  
high profile in  
advising. Keep it up!  
Dorothy Nelson

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exemplary practice. That honoree receives a cash award and is nominated for the NACADA Outstanding Advising Award.

*This exemplary practice description was prepared by Dr. Lee Ward, director of career and academic planning.*

## KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY

*Integrated Academic and Career Advising Center Name:* The Advising Center for Undeclared Students

*Location:* Located in the rural community of Kutztown, in southeastern Pennsylvania

*Institutional Type:* Four-year, public institution, one of the 14 state universities that comprise the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)

*Highest Degree Granted:* Master's Degree

*Total Number of Students:* Undergraduate Enrollment: 9,311 Graduate Enrollment: 834

*Center url:* [www.kutztown.edu/academics/advisement](http://www.kutztown.edu/academics/advisement)

*Contact Person:* Linda Lantaff, instructor/advisor, [lantaff@kutztown.edu](mailto:lantaff@kutztown.edu), 610-683-4735

### Mission and Objectives of Center and Program

*Mission Statement.* Serving as a connection between students and the campus community, the Advising Center for Undeclared Students advises and advocates for students to affect their decision-making skills, enabling them to explore and choose majors, transition to college, and pursue academic and personal goals. The objectives of the Advising Center are to

- Assist students in self-understanding and self-acceptance (understanding abilities, interests, and limitations)
- Assist students in clarifying their life goals by relating their vocational personality (interests, skills, and abilities) to careers, academic disciplines, and majors
- Assist students in developing an educational plan consistent with their life goals
- Assist students in developing decision-making skills
- Provide accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs
- Assist students in using university technology
- Assist students in evaluating or reevaluating progress toward established goals and educational plans
- Refer students to other campus services

## Center History

At Kutztown University (KU), academic advisement is a formally assigned duty of the faculty and is performed exclusively by faculty members in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement. Accordingly, KU adopted a decentralized faculty-only model of academic advising. Undeclared students, historically, were assigned to faculty advisors from various departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, who had few declared advisees.

In 1998, in response to a growing awareness of the special needs of undeclared students, and in the face of increasing numbers of undeclared students, KU created the Advising Center for Undeclared Students. The Advising Center was established as a centralized office, under the direction of a tenured faculty member and staffed by volunteer faculty advisors from various academic departments. Reporting directly to the provost/vice president of academic affairs, the Advising Center operated in conjunction with the decentralized, faculty-based advisement model.

Over the course of the next 10 years, the enrollment of undeclared students grew 35%. Undeclared students currently represent over 22% of the entering freshmen class and 10% of Kutztown's undergraduate population. The staff of the Advising Center also grew to include several dedicated faculty advisors. In 2004, two academic planners (non-faculty, master's level, professional staff) were hired to complement the advising staff. With the hiring of the academic planners, the Advising Center was able to offer a full range of services to undeclared students and more fully integrate the concept of career advising.

## Description of Center, Including Services and Programs Offered

The Advising Center for Undeclared Students serves as an academic home for undeclared students at KU. The center is staffed with both faculty advisors (advising specialists) and academic planners (career specialists) who, together, provide comprehensive, developmental career advising for undeclared students until the time they declare a major. The Advising Center assists students in selecting and scheduling courses, establishing and evaluating academic goals, understanding and navigating university policies and procedures, connecting with other university programs and resources, exploring majors and related careers, and declaring a major.

The Advising Center is located conveniently on campus and is in close proximity to other important campus offices, including the bursar's office, Career Development Center, the Counseling Center, the financial aid office, and the registrar's office. The layout of the Advising Center provides private offices for faculty advisors and academic planners, a comfortable waiting area, and a conference room with integrated technology for small group advising sessions and workshops.

## Methods of Service or Program Delivery

The Advising Center offers one-on-one appointments for students throughout the academic year. Both faculty advisors and academic planners meet with students

individually to help them establish and meet their educational goals and make informed decisions about their academic careers. Faculty advisors are responsible for course selection and course registration functions, helping students to evaluate their options in specific majors and selecting appropriate courses based on each student's individual goals. All students are required to meet with a faculty advisor at least once each semester for course selection purposes. Academic planners are responsible for the broader career development functions, including the administration and interpretation of the Career Key; helping students to connect their interests, abilities, and values to careers and academic majors; and helping students to locate and use career/major information and evaluate their options.

As a student moves through the decision-making process, referrals back and forth between academic planners and faculty advisors are easily accommodated. A system of common student files and session notes allow for a seamless process, during which both faculty advisors and academic planners can stay abreast of the students' goals and progress toward achieving those goals.

In addition, the Advising Center offers a variety of workshops. A series of major and career exploration workshops, including workshops on choosing a major, occupational trends, decision making, and academic goal setting, are facilitated by the academic planners, while academic workshops that focus on the entrance requirements of specific majors and are more advising focused are facilitated by the faculty advisors.

The Advising Center has developed a one-credit college success course, UST 015 University Studies, and a three-credit Experiential Learning Portfolio Development Seminar designed to help students earn credit for life experience. Undeclared students have the opportunity to participate in a voluntary living and learning community that focuses on helping them discover their interests.

### **Students Served by Center**

The Advising Center serves students who enter Kutztown University as undeclared students, declared students who change their major to undeclared in order to explore other options, and declared students who are administratively removed from their major due to poor academic performance or failure to meet other departmental requirements.

While most of the students served by the Advising Center report that they are undecided or uncertain about their choice of major, not all undeclared students are undecided students. In fact in 2008, 16% of first-year undeclared students and 66.4% of undeclared transfer students reported that they were certain about their choice of major at the time of application, but were denied admission to that major. These students entered KU undeclared with the hopes of subsequently declaring their first choice major.

### **Center Staffing**

A tenured faculty member serves as both the director of the advising center and the chair of the department of academic advisement. The director is



responsible for the overall administration of the advising program for undeclared students. The director reports to the associate provost/vice president of academic affairs.

Two tenure track faculty advisors provide advising services to undeclared students. Another tenure track faculty member serves as the coordinator of academic jeopardy and advises undeclared students with a GPA less than 2.00, in addition to providing supplemental advising to all declared students with a GPA below a 2.00. All faculty members teach the university studies course, serve on campuswide committees, and engage in professional development activities.

Two master's level, professional staff members serve as academic planners. Academic planners provide career advising to undeclared students; develop resources that assist in the career advising process; communicate with undeclared students through periodic newsletters, e-mails, and telephone contacts; and are instrumental in the implementation of the assessment plan. Academic planners also serve on campuswide committees and engage in professional development.

### How Are Career and Academic Advising Integrated?

The Advising Center utilizes John Holland's theory of personality and work environments as a framework to engage students in discussion and reflection about potential majors, career paths, and course selection. The staff also employs a simple decision-making model to help students conceptualize the decision-making process. Both academic planners and faculty advisors use session notes to document where students are in the process and the goals they are working toward. Together they help students take responsibility in making their own decisions.

The concept of career advising is first introduced to students at orientation, during which, the academic planners discuss the advising program and administer and interpret the Career Key. Undeclared students identify their Holland code and learn how occupations, majors, and work environments are categorized. Results of the Career Key are then placed in students' files in the Advising Center. This enables faculty advisors and academic planners to be prepared to integrate the concepts of vocational personality and work environments into the advising process when the students arrive on campus in the fall. As students become more aware of their interests and options, they are encouraged to move ahead or return to parts of the decision-making process. Being keenly aware that personal barriers may impede the decision-making process, the staff is trained to identify these concerns and make appropriate referrals when necessary.

### Resources

The Advising Center publishes the *Academic Advising Portfolio* each year which serves as a student advising handbook and includes information on the advising process, responsibilities of the advisor and student, general education requirements, the process for choosing and declaring a major, and campus resources.

The On-Track newsletter, which is published several times a year, is aimed at addressing the needs and concerns of first-year undeclared students.

The Advising Center maintains a comprehensive interactive Web site. A special section on choosing a major leads students through a decision-making process where they can learn about themselves, gather information about careers and majors, evaluate their options, and learn how to declare a major.

The Advising Center also maintains a wide range of handouts, including an inventory of graduation checklists for KU majors and minors, copies of *What Can I Do with a Major In*, as well as a series of informational guides on various topics including declaring a major, setting up an e-mail account, and registering for courses online.

The Advising Center maintains a close working relationship with the Career Development Center (CDC). Students are encouraged to visit the CDC to use the career library, attend employer presentations, and, in some cases, take additional assessments, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Major/Minor Finder, and the Self-Directed Search. Likewise, the CDC may refer declared students to the Advising Center if they are interested in changing their majors, but need time to explore their options before declaring other majors.

### Accountability

Evidence of the effectiveness of the Advising Center for Undeclared Students is gathered through various sources including retention statistics, rates of major declaration, and student surveys. The Advising Center is currently making revisions and expanding its assessment plan to include the use of rubrics and focus groups to more effectively assess learning outcomes.

The Fall-to-Fall retention rate of first-time, full-time undeclared students for 2006–2007 was 74.4%. These numbers compare favorably to the 77% for all first-time, full-time students at KU during the same time period. The percentage of undeclared students declaring a major ranged from 44.5% to 49% over the last three years. Not reflected in these numbers are the students who decide on a major not offered at KU and transfer out as a “decided” student. The Advising Center views these students as “successful” in meeting the goals of the center, but currently these students are counted in the attrition statistics.

### Strengths of Advising Center

The strength of the Advising Center for Undeclared Students begins with the commitment and enthusiasm of each staff member. The synergy of this group provides the foundation on which this center thrives.

Also, the structure of the Advising Center itself is a strength, with academic planners and advisors sharing the same physical space, mission, goals, reporting structure, common student files, and session notes. A student has the benefit of working with both advising specialists and career specialists who, together, provide a comprehensive, seamless approach to academic decision making.

The location of the Advising Center is another key to the success of the advising program. The centralized location provides easy access to important

administrative offices, and the office layout provides a professional space for students and staff.

### Challenges of Center

The Advising Center serves a significant number of students at KU. The complexity of the needs and concerns of these students require a committed and well trained staff of faculty advisors and academic planners. The Advising Center struggles with meeting the needs of these students at the current staffing level. Appointments with faculty advisors are now limited to 30-minute sessions to ensure that all students have access to the advising staff for course selection at minimum. Academic planners currently meet with students for 50-minute sessions, but student demand may also dictate shorter sessions in the future.

### Future Plans

Future plans for the Advising Center for Undeclared Students include implementing a comprehensive outcomes-based assessment plan. The development of the systematic plan is to be completed in spring 2009 and implemented in the 2009–2010 academic year. By instituting a comprehensive assessment plan, the center will be in better position to make decisions about the allocation of both human and financial resources.

### Professional Development Provided Staff to Enhance Career and Academic Advising

The faculty and staff of the Advising Center actively participate in various conferences, including conferences of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), the First-Year Experience (FYE), and the Mid-Atlantic Career Counseling Association (MACCA). In addition, the faculty and staff stay current in the field by reading various publications including the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *NACADA Journal*, the *Journal of The First-Year Experience & Students In Transition*, and the *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*.

*This exemplary practice description was prepared by Linda Lantaff, instructor/academic planner II.*

## NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

*Integrated Academic and Career Advising Center Name:* Gateway Student Success Center

*Location:* Flagstaff, Arizona

*Institutional Type:* Located in rural Arizona, near edge of the largest Native Nation in the United States, Northern Arizona University is the largest residential campus west of Mississippi. Four-year public.

*Highest Degree Granted:* Doctoral

*Total Number of Students:* 16,787 undergraduate and 5,720 graduate students (Flagstaff Mountain Campus)

*Center url:* [www.nau.edu/gateway](http://www.nau.edu/gateway)