

2019-2024
VIRGINIA TECH
ACADEMIC
ADVISING
STRATEGIC PLAN

Last Updated 8/10/2022

Office of Academic
Advising Initiatives

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Advising Matters at Virginia Tech

Faculty and staff across our colleges and campus offices collaborated to develop this strategic advising plan. Their voices live within this document.

The **Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising** established by NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising and The John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education were the inspiration for the strategic goals that follow. These goals direct preliminary steps for achieving our long-term future as an institution of distinction for holistic student advising, through the expansion and implementation of initiatives that enhance, promote, and support academic advisor growth, development, equity, and inclusion.

The 2019 – 2024 Academic Advising Strategic Plan connects to Virginia Tech’s broader institutional strategic plan, **The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries** as well as our institution’s Advising Mission, Philosophy, and Statements of Responsibility.



Advising Mission

Advising at Virginia Tech is a collaborative process between student and advisor, leading to the exchange of information that encourages the individual student to make responsible academic and career decisions.

Philosophy

Virginia Tech demonstrates a commitment to advising through recognizing and supporting the needs of students and advisors. Each undergraduate student at the University is provided with information and assistance, which aids the individual student in making responsible academic and career decisions. Each advisor is provided the necessary tools to respond to student needs and the opportunity to be recognized and rewarded for exemplary advising. Virginia Tech, in support of this philosophy, will provide student-focused advising and assist students in developing skills that lead them to take active responsibility for the advising process.

Statement of University Responsibility

Senior leaders will provide leadership by:

- Reviewing the advising process to assess the impact of the recommendations implemented;
- Providing information for students, advisors, parents, and other constituents that clearly explain responsibilities and expectations related to advising;
- Making information available about advising for all new faculty and appropriate staff;
- Collecting and disseminating information that contributes to effective advising;
- Assisting students in the clarification of academic and long term goals;
- Supporting initiatives to enhance the use of technology in advising;
- Providing support for a web-based interactive advising support system for students, advisors, parents, and other constituents;
and
- Supporting a Virginia Tech plan that would effectively assess, recognize, and reward advising in the annual professional evaluation.

Statement of Student Responsibility

The student shares the responsibility for developing an advising partnership with the advisor. Over time, the partnership results in increased responsibility for the student. The student will:

- Communicating goals, needs, wants, and concerns to the advisor in a respectful and sincere manner;
- Keeping abreast of their own academic progress and requirements related to their academic program;
- Making, keeping, and being prepared for appointments with an advisor;
- Informing the advisor of changes in plans and/or circumstances that might impact academic performance;
- Knowing departmental procedures for changing advisors; and
- Bringing concerns regarding the quality of advising to the attention of the advisor.

Statement of Advisor Responsibility

The advisor shares the responsibility for developing an advising partnership with undergraduate students. This is achieved through the advisor:

- Communicating with students and delivering individualized and accurate information in a professional, sincere manner;
- Being informed of, and providing accurate information about current academic policies and procedures;
- Keeping appointments and being available for assistance;
- Providing appropriate referrals, contacts, and information;
- Doing appropriate follow-up with students; and
- Seeking out and taking advantage of opportunities for professional development

Goal #1—Develop advising resources that promote and support equity, inclusion, and diversity.

Strategies:

1. Enhance web-presence to promote and support equity, inclusion, and diversity at VT.
2. Develop a monthly advising newsletter to include a focus on equity, inclusion, and diversity.
3. Develop peer mentoring and shadowing programs for advisors.

Connections to the *Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising*

- Advisor Selection and Development
- Collaboration and Communication
- Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity
- Technology-Enabled Advising

Connections to *The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*

- Priority 1—Advance Regional, National, and Global Impact
 - Goal 3—Increase institutional impact and visibility.
- Priority 2—Elevate the Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) Difference
 - Goal 2—Increase cultural competency

Update and Progress Towards Goal

- Partnered with AAI to create a DEI focused training module for academic advisors who serve as mentors through the [Academic Advisor Mentor Program \(AAMP\)](#)
- Hosted the first annual food drive for VT Marketplace for students who experience food insecurity
- Posts a relevant date, event, or resource in the [Advising Newsletter](#) on a monthly basis (DEI FYI) to keep advisors informed on campus events
- In progress: website updates around DEI focused resources and trainings

Goal #2—Establish inclusive best practices for recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse community of academic advisors.

Strategies:

1. Develop a job description template to facilitate consistency.
2. Develop an advisor recruitment and hiring “toolbox,” which identifies resources that support a diverse applicant pool.
3. Establish an advisor career ladder to facilitate reward, promotion, and retention.

Connections to the *Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising*

- Institutional Commitment
- Advisor Selection and Development
- Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

Connections to *The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*

- Priority 2—Elevate the Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) Difference
 - Goal 1— Increase representational diversity
- Priority 3—Be a Destination for Talent
 - Goal 1— Attract, retain, and develop the talents of faculty and staff

Update and Progress Towards Goal

- Working with Human Resources in conjunction with the Job Architecture project already underway

Goal #3—Provide guidelines for effective case management.

Strategies:

1. Analyze existing caseloads and duties /responsibilities related to job descriptions.
2. Provide resources and strategies for effective case management.

Connections to the *Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising*

- Institutional Commitment
- Organization

Connections to *The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*

- Priority 4— Ensure Institutional Excellence
 - Goal 1— Continue to develop the physical campus and technology infrastructure
- Priority 4—Ensure Institutional Excellence
 - Goal 2— Develop comprehensive and transparent budget and financial models with diverse and sustainable revenue sources

Update and Progress Towards Goal

- Conducted case management research and gathered campus-wide data on caseloads, advisors' duties, and percentage of academic advising
- Provide a monthly case management tip and article within the [Advising Newsletter](#)
- In progress: partnering with the Advising Network to host a [case management panel](#) in September 2022

Goal #4—Establish an academic advisor onboarding protocol.

Strategies:

1. Build upon the existing new advisor checklist for the University, and have each college establish their own.
2. Establish a policies and procedures manual for advisors.
3. Establish a yearly advisor professional development plan.

Connections to the *Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising*

- Institutional Commitment
- Advisor Selection and Development
- Collaboration and Communication

Connections to *The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*

- Priority 2—Elevate the Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) Difference,
 - Goal 3— Address critical societal issues impacting humanity and equity
- Priority 3—Be a Destination for Talent,
 - Goal 1— Attract, retain, and develop the talents of faculty and staff

Update and Progress Towards Goal

- Created and launched onboarding modules: Virginia Tech Academic Advisors Fundamentals in [PageUp LMS Training](#)
 - Created [Participant Guide](#) for Academic Advisor Onboarding
 - Created [Supervisor Guide](#) for Academic Advisor Onboarding
- In Progress: updating the existing new [advisor checklist](#) for the university and college specific checklists

Goal #5— Enhance existing professional development opportunities that are both accessible and relevant to academic advising.

Strategies:

1. Develop opportunities to strengthen advising practices.
2. Promote scholarly work related to academic advising.

Connections to the *Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising*

- Advisor Selection and Development

Connections to *The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*

- Priority 2—Elevate the Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) Difference,
 - Goal 2—Increase cultural competency
- Priority 3—Be a Destination for Talent,
 - Goal 1— Attract, retain, and develop the talents of faculty and staff

Update and Progress Towards Goal

- This group is working with Goal #2 to help establish criteria within the career ladder to promote professional growth.

Goal #6—Establish an advising framework that is informed by the values and beliefs of Virginia Tech.

Strategies:

1. Establish an academic advising curriculum.
2. Articulate a pedagogy for delivering academic advising.
3. Develop student learning outcomes for advising encounters.
4. Develop assessment measures for advising effectiveness.
5. Update the existing mission statement of responsibility and definition of advising.

Connections to the *Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising*

- Learning
- Institutional Commitment

Connections to *The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*

- Priority 1—Advance Regional, National, and Global Impact
 - Goal 2— Increase teaching and learning excellence for a holistic education
- Priority 4—Ensure Institutional Excellence
 - Goal 1— Continue to develop the physical campus and technology infrastructure
 - Goal 2—Develop comprehensive and transparent budget and financial models with diverse and sustainable revenue sources
 - Goal 3—Develop and launch an adaptive, inclusive process for continuous strategic planning

Update and Progress Towards Goal

- Updated Virginia Tech's [advising mission statement](#)
- Hosted an Assessment Summit featuring a NACADA speaker, Casey Self
- Developed Virginia Tech's [student learning outcomes](#) for academic advising
- Developed [Advising Assessment Leadership Group \(AALG\)](#) to carry out the advising assessment process

Goal #7—Develop an effective advising communication plan.

Strategies:

1. Develop a plan for enhancing communication for all advising stakeholders
2. Develop a plan that offers timely and consistent information for students

Connection to the *Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising*

- Collaboration and Communication

Connections to *The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*

- Priority 4—Ensure Institutional Excellence
 - o Goal 1— Continue to develop the physical campus and technology infrastructure
 - o Goal 3—Develop and launch an adaptive, inclusive process for continuous strategic planning

Update and Progress Towards Goal

In Progress: developing a communication template to include advising communication recommendations for students

Goal #8—Incorporate appropriate advising technologies to complement, support, and enhance advising practices.

Strategies:

1. Use advising technology to enhance the advising experience.
2. Provide ongoing training for advising technologies.

Connections to the *Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising*

- Advisor Selection and Development
- Collaboration and Communication
- Technology-Enabled Advising

Connections to *The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries*

- Priority 1—Advance Regional, National, and Global Impact
 - Goal 3—Increase institutional impact and visibility.
- Priority 4—Ensure Institutional Excellence
 - Goal 1— Continue to develop the physical campus and technology infrastructure

Update and Progress Towards Goal

- Developed the [Advisor Technology Resource Page](#) which provides an overview of the technology used in advising as well as a point of contact for each platform and training materials
- Incorporating advising technology in advising chats facilitated by the Advising Network