

Faculty Mentoring Sub-Committee of the Academic Advising Council

As Baylor University enhances its advising model, it has become clear that professional advising and faculty mentoring represent two pillars that are both required to support student success throughout a student's entire time at Baylor. Under the adopted advising plans, students will be professionally advised (under the model, by 2 advisors during their entire Baylor undergraduate career) and will see faculty mentors as appropriate to their field(s) of study and post-baccalaureate plans. This document represents an extensive, by no means complete, list indicating many forms/concepts of Faculty Mentoring that are valuable for Baylor University students. These efforts begin before matriculation and do not end at graduation, although the most intensive work is likely to take place during the students' undergraduate time on campus.

This document demonstrates the varied and numerous mentoring tasks that are part of many faculty workloads already; faculty have expertise and experience and are well-equipped to mentor students in these areas. The effective **partnering of faculty mentors with professional advisors** will create a "circle of care" for our students and increase the value of the interactions students have with both advisors and faculty mentors.

Other questions regarding faculty mentoring **not** handled in this document are:

- Possible models of faculty mentoring in departments,
- Facilitating sound communication between/among professional advisors and faculty mentors,
- University systems that could increase faculty mentor's efficiency by providing ready student information and access, and
- The place of and quantification of mentoring within the workload of faculty (should it be regarded as teaching or service? What measurement of mentoring is valuable? How can this work be encouraged and given its worth in the discussion of what a Baylor University education means? Incentives, regard within the department, assigned time, use of documentation to request help, etc.)

Pre-matriculation (in the 18 months prior to matriculation at Baylor)

- Meet with interested students at Premiere, Invitation to Excellence, Campus visits etc.
- Answer questions (in person and by email/phone) about the major, current students, successful graduates in the field
- Connect future students to current students so that they are confident of their Baylor choice.
- Encourage student to think broadly what s/he will study so that a good fit for the student's interests and skills can be discovered.
- Know the curriculum and degree plan(s) of the department/field.
- Refer questions about financial issues, scholarships, admission, general education requirements, internships, jobs, etc. to the correct office so that questions are answered completely.

Academic Mentoring (students enrolled)

- Express interest in and give positive feedback to students regarding ALL University work, not just an individual class. Help them adopt a positive attitude toward their Baylor education.
- Encourage students to set goals for all their classes to strengthen their self-discipline and academically excel across the curriculum.
- Encourage students to seek out peers in their interests.
- Facilitate meetings that connect early students with upper-division students in their field.
- Sponsor student organizations, allowing students to make decisions and plans but monitoring the progress and affairs in a hands-on, cooperative way.
- Encourage and model a professional demeanor, behavior, vocabulary, seriousness of purpose.
- Invite students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, rather than relying on grades to be their sole measure of success. Discuss discrepancies between grades and strengths.
- Communicate to students that everything they spend time on can strengthen their resume and make them more qualified than other applicants who may hold the same degree. Discuss ways to talk about a job, being officer in an organization, and volunteering that show the development of skills in those activities.
- Encourage students to know their general education and core requirements.
- Connect students to on-campus resources, offices, and other professional staff.
- Partner and communicate with professional mentors via UAS comments and up-to-date information to encourage students to follow up on advice and suggestions.
- Advocate for and reassure students who are discouraged by or uncertain about their progress or their interaction with other parts of the University.
- Provide insight into degree plan (sequencing and courses offered) in your field, so that students are comfortable with the degree planning within your department.
- Recommend extracurricular experiences that are valuable in the field to broaden their understanding of the field and encourage an outward-looking orientation of the field.
- Encourage students to apply for appropriate scholarships, internships, job and volunteer opportunities on and off campus. If these are not readily apparent to your students, maintain a list of relevant opportunities and publicize them. Work with Career and Professional Development office to identify opportunities and get them into students' hands.
- Help students understand that research is a time-intensive activity and no paper written last night was a student's best work.
- Encourage a wide array of on campus activities: lectures, conferences, concerts, groups, in order to foster community development and help students find their "place".
- Foster a discussion about how students spend their time outside the classroom. Resist their insistence that they are "too busy", instead help them to prioritize their time to develop self-discipline and greater care for their educational work.
- Provide realistic information about the ideal (and minimal in some cases) performance level that is needed for success in the field.
- Remind students of the markers and pacing of success specific in your field (examples: job shadowing, prepare for MCAT, LSAT, GRE, suitable research experiences, jobs, etc.)

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- Encourage an apprentice/mentorship model that allows students to learn the expectations and skills in the field as introduced by and fostered by faculty mentors.
- Encourage students to aim for a public presentation of their work, for example present their research, submitting it to an undergraduate journal, presenting for scholars' week, URSA presentation, etc. both to enhance their resume and to boost their confidence.
- Give students the chance to meet with and hear from recent graduates from your program in person or through a structured "meeting place" that provides that interaction.
- Mentor students' applications, offer to read their resumes and letters, encouraging them to identify their strengths. Help them to see how they can tell their story in a compelling way.
- Recommend study abroad and mission options that are relevant or expected in the discipline.
- Write recommendations letters and serve as a reference and background check (National Security, military).
- Ask students to follow up with you when you serve as a reference or recommender.
- Follow up with seniors who are planning their post-baccalaureate plans so that they don't lose focus or lose confidence. Discuss alternate paths to the same goal, and different goals that may be unknown to the students.
- Offer information about expertise and know colleagues' expertise so that you can put students together with the information they need. (Who in your department is best suited to talk to about graduate school, internships, law-school, etc.?)
- Provide speakers, workshops and peer meetings to help students learn about the field.
- Connect undergraduates, especially as they work to fulfill the major requirements, with graduates in the field and in adjoining fields, so that future plans can become more concrete.
- Make students aware of departmental policies, nuances, traditions and expectations so that students can feel confident in their interactions with the department and share this information with their peers.

Post-Baccalaureate

- Track students moves directly out of undergraduate (additional schooling, jobs, internships, international and national scholarships, etc.) and encourage graduates to keep in touch about changes, questions, ideas that could strengthen the program.
- Invite graduates both on and off campus to encourage undergraduates by sharing their stories, successes, lessons learned, etc.
- Use university contacts to keep graduates apprised of departmental and Baylor successes, so that they stay connected to the university.
- Encourage graduates to think of Baylor students and how they can help Baylor students in their season as alumni. Departmental newsletters that highlight both alumni and undergraduate items help them to envision ways they can be involved in the University.
- Provide opportunities for graduates to give back (financial and through service) to the University and the department/program.
- Keep in touch with graduates so that they stay involved in Baylor activities and encourage the best potential students they meet to come to Baylor.

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In conclusion, this committee has identified numerous methods of faculty mentoring and many avenues of helping students through mentoring already ongoing and largely undocumented across Baylor University departments. These interactions among faculty and students begin as future students show an interest in Baylor University and specific discipline(s) often in the junior year of high school and continue long after graduation. The following recommendations encourage faculty mentoring as an essential complement to professional advising in the new model. The committee believes that these recommendations will enhance faculty mentoring of students and faculty's ability to quantify and represent the unique work involved in faculty mentoring.

Committee Recommendations:

- 1) Departments or units will develop plans appropriate to their students and disciplines to enhance communication with students and success in the discipline(s).
- 2) UAS will be adapted to allow faculty mentors to document their mentoring contacts with students, both through a drop-down list of common activities and with more detail. These communications will allow more transparency among faculty mentors, professional advisors and students as they develop plans for success in their degree and after their Baylor degrees. Faculty mentors will receive access to UAS to facilitate this communication. Additional information must be shared and accessible in order to faculty to be effective mentors.
- 3) Faculty will be encouraged to identify their roles individually and within departments in mentoring students and will be able to call up reports on that activity.
- 4) The significance of faculty mentoring will be made visible, allowing it to be discussed as part of the workload of faculty (quantified and measured).

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Tuesday April 29, 2014