



Office of the Chancellor  
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Provost Denise Runge  
**FROM:** Chancellor Sean Parnell DocuSigned by:  
Sean Parnell  
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**DATE:** April 4, 2022  
**RE:** Charge memo to establish a 'Student-First' approach to professional academic advising

The Provost is charged with convening a working group to devise and deploy a 'Student-First' approach to academic advising.

Numerous challenges arise within the academic advising context that UAA needs resolved, including the following:

- First Year Student Advising and Success (FYSAS) is a centralized office based on national best practices, but does not serve students in all academic colleges, campuses, or programs.
- At present, UAA has a decentralized advising model. Each of the six academic colleges and schools (CAS, CTC, CBPP, COE, COH, and SOE) hire and manage professional academic advising staff within their college, who primarily serve majors on the Anchorage campus. Community Campus advising staffing, structures, and processes are likewise decentralized. Additionally, without centralized oversight and coordination to ensure common standards, practices, and assessment, both the student experience and the advisor experience vary greatly across advising units, promoting, at best, inconsistency, of advising services for our students.
- The decentralized structure results in an opt-in approach to institutional-wide student success initiatives, such as first year advising and use of EAB Navigate, UAA's student success management system.
- Student access to advising appointments, real-time support, and student success resources is inequitable, as practices vary unit-to-unit.
- Some of the student success practices that we know are necessary to improve persistence currently, such as advisor follow-up to faculty progress reports and alerts, are currently implemented by some units, but not others.

- The current model results in time and process redundancies for personnel and students to navigate the different standards and practices among each unit.
- Advising caseloads for professional advisors vary widely from unit to unit: some advisors serve 900 or more students; others serve fewer than 200.
- Likewise, the additional responsibilities, available training and resources, and opportunities for professional advancement vary widely for professional advising staff.

In my view, UAA students could greatly benefit from the creation of a more centralized, Student-First approach to professional academic advising. Using the UAA 2025 strategic plan as a guide, please formulate a plan to develop such an approach. This Student First Academic Advising Plan should advance equity and inclusion for all students and ensure advising excellence through continuous improvement. Please complete the planning work described herein by June 30, 2022.

Thank you for leading this initiative. I am confident that it will benefit the students we serve, UAA, and our communities for many years to come. Please let me know if you have any questions, and please provide regular updates on progress towards the establishment of this plan between now and June 30th.