Proposal for Mandatory Undergraduate Advising
Academic Advising Council
April 30, 2007

In 2001, PSU adopted the Advising Model developed by the President's Student Advising Action Council (SAAC). The SAAC Model specifies that:

- All undergraduates will attend Orientation.
- All incoming undergraduates will have an individual advising session at UASC within first 24 credits at PSU.
- All undergraduates will declare a major prior to completing 120 credits.
- Upon declaration of a major, all undergraduates will be advised on all requirements within the major department. Declared majors should meet with a departmental advisor at least once prior to the completion of 90 credits.
- UASC will continue to advise undeclared undergraduates.

Departments have created Departmental Advising Plans to meet the intent of the Model, but the University, for financial reasons, has shied away from making any part of the requirements mandatory. The result is a fragmented system. AAC feels that PSU has reached the limits of what it can achieve with voluntary compliance and that it is time to start moving toward a mandatory model.

In order to make the model mandatory, AAC recommends that PSU increase the number of Professional Advisers so that each student might be assigned to an adviser who will be responsible for that student's progress. Professional Advisers will not replace Faculty Advisers but will work in concert with them to guide the student through the University to graduation.

AAC recommends that PSU pilot a mandatory advising program with incoming Freshmen in Fall 2007. Dan Fortmiller reports that the recommended case load for Professional Advisers is 300 students. Assigning each incoming Freshman to a Professional Adviser will require the creation of 4.5 new Academic Professional positions for an investment of approximately $270,000.00. AAC recommends that the University make that investment in new positions in CLAS and UASC and that each member of the incoming Freshman class who attends Orientation prior to August 15 be assigned to one of those advisers. For this cohort of students, we recommend the following:

- All students will be REQUIRED to attend Orientation prior to registering for Fall term.
- All students will be REQUIRED to meet with their advisers at least once during their first two terms at PSU.
- All students will be REQUIRED to declare a major prior to the completion of 90 credits. Students who do not meet this expectation will be REQUIRED to meet with their advisers prior to registering for the following term.

Because Orientation materials for 2007-08 have already been printed and distributed, we have defined the pilot cohort as students who attend Orientation prior to August 15. If Orientation is to become mandatory for all students, we suggest that the University consider establishing August 15 as a cutoff date for Fall admissions. We also suggest that the University investigate the feasibility of administering ACT COMPASS Placement Tests to all students, possibly in

conjunction with Orientation. Increased participation in Orientation in time will also require increased funding.

We note that the draft report of the Joint Working Groups to Improve Student Success through Engaged Learning Experiences (4/07) calls for the establishment of a "formative system of advising to monitor student success." AAC firmly believes that academic advising is directly related to student success. If mandatory advising is introduced, the committee believes that it will result in increased student satisfaction, increased retention and graduation rates, and decreased time to completion of degree. AAC recommends that the pilot Freshman class be carefully assessed and, if the results meet expectations, that mandatory advising then be extended to the rest of the University.