

Date: July 17, 2017

To: Jay D. Gatrell, Provost  
Academic Affairs

From: Mona Davenport, Director  
Office of Minority Affairs

Karla Sanders, Executive Director  
Center for Academic Support and Assessment

CC: Jeff Cross, AVP  
Academic Affairs

**RE: Formal Proposal to Realign Reporting Lines to Enhance the Academic Advising Experience**

The following is a collaborative and mutually agreed upon proposal to enhance academic advising for all EIU students and leverage the Gateway program to more effectively, and complement/expand the existing student support services vis-à-vis the creation of a one stop student success infrastructure for all student populations. As such, the proposal reassigns the Gateway program from the Office of Minority Affairs to Center for Academic Support and Assessment (CASA). As part of the proposed restructuring, we will ensure:

1. The job descriptions and work plans will be in compliance with the current Unit B contract.
2. The scope and responsibilities of current CASA advisors will remain unchanged relative to approved ASP duties.
3. The Gateway program will continue to be guided by the program's mission and co-located with their new colleagues in 9<sup>th</sup> Street Hall. That is, Gateway staff will be relocated from Blair Hall to the 9<sup>th</sup> Street facility.
4. All advisors will be provided with enhanced professional development during the transition period as well as on-going training to maximize the effectiveness of academic advising beginning in Spring 2018.

The request will result in 4 ASPs and 1 civil service employee being reassigned to CASA—as well as all budget authority for accounts assigned to the Gateway program.

**RATIONALE.** The rationale for the proposed restructuring includes: Strategic & Everyday Collaboration, Creation of a One-Stop Location, and Enhanced Retention.

**Strategic & Everyday Collaboration.** Since enrollment has declined, the biggest advantage to this move would be to create a single full-service academic advising unit to serve all first-year students [Gateway participants, first-time full-time, transfers, international, and honors]. This

will provide CASA with an opportunity to redistribute and balance workload more effectively and permit professional advisors to serve a more inclusive population of students. As such, the potential exists to reduce the workload of CASA professionals and increase the overall effectiveness of first year advising.

**One-Stop Location.** Making this move will make 9<sup>th</sup> Street Hall a “one-stop-shop” for the vast majority of our academic services for students. Moving the Gateway advisors into the Academic Advising Center will ensure that all first-year students will be advised in the same unit and will provide other services for students in the same building. The Office of Student Disability Services, the Student Success Center as well as the TRiO program are all housed in 9<sup>th</sup> Street Hall and with OSDS and SSC reporting to the Executive Director of CASA. This close working relationship makes referrals and providing support services convenient for students.

**Enhanced Student Retention.** Advising can have an impact on persistence and graduation (Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2005). Student retention is an institutional concern, and if we combine the advising styles from both groups (intrusive and holistic advising), our retention will likely increase for these students. Currently, our student retention has a slight decrease annually.

Student Retention for First-Year Cohorts

Year	Fall to Fall
Fall 2015	71%
Fall 2014	75%
Fall 2013	76%
Fall 2012	77%

Retention by Admit Type for First-Year Cohorts

Cohort Year	Gateway	Other Provisional Admits (ACE/SIHL)	Standard Admits	Overall Retention Fall to Fall
Fall 2012	63%	NA	85%	77%
Fall 2013	66%	61%	81%	76%
Fall 2014	66%	63%	82%	75%
Fall 2015	54%	64%	77%	71%

Klepfer & Hull (2012) identified factors as positively linked to first-to-second year college retention. They said that seeing an advisor “sometimes” or “often” during the first-year of college is important.

As the institution’s first-generation students continue to account for a large proportion of our

students, EIU must make sure all of our students have the opportunity for accessing needed assistance their first-year to be successful. The following tables show the need for enhanced advising practices and staff collaboration for both standard and provisional admits. The collaboration of advisors will give them an opportunity to learn from each other.

EIU’s First Generation Student Population

Year	First-Generation Enrollment	Percentage of First Generation students
Fall 2016	2,701	45%
Fall 2015	3,346	46%
Fall 2014	3,715	49%
Fall 2013	4,087	49%

In closing, the proposed realignment of advising staff resources will leverage existing resources to promote improved student success. When and where efficiencies and cross-training may be appropriate, CASA will work with and consult advisors to develop appropriate strategies to enhance the EIU student experience over the next two years.

**CONSULTATION & PROCESS.** Since the concept of creating a one-stop campus resource was raised during the 2017 spring semester, the academic support professionals and other staff of the units to be reorganized/merged have been consulted during the planning process that led to this proposal. The consultations include:

- Meeting separately with the staff of the affected units during the week of February 13 to present and consider the concept; and
- Joint meetings with affected unit staffs on February 24 and March 24 to review the concept and to address questions;

Additionally, Shelley James, Director of the Academic Advising Center, met with both staffs throughout the spring semester to share information, brainstorm, answer questions, and solicit feedback. As a result of the initial consultations, staff feedback was used to inform, as well enhance, the development of the formal proposal.

With the submission of this formal proposal, we respectfully request moving forward with the formal review and campus consultation process to ensure compliance with all bargaining agreements, as well as internal policies and procedures.