



## Academic Success Center

Dear Colleagues,

As you may recall, in February 2020, President Hemphill made a campus-wide announcement regarding the creation of the Academic Success Center (ASC). The ASC is intended to effectively serve our students and to support their abilities and opportunities to achieve their academic goals and succeed at RU. In June 2020, I was hired to serve as Executive Director of the new Center.

At this time, the ASC is excited to enter into its first phase of operation and to begin serving our first cohort of incoming students. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the ASC will be staffed by one professional academic advisor from each of the six undergraduate colleges, the academic advisors from the Advising Center for Major Exploration, the Office of New Student and Family Programs, and the Office of Student Success. This team will provide centralized, holistic, individualized academic advising to students through a case management and developmental, proactive advising approach. Working closely with faculty advisors in all of our colleges, students will be served directly by their ASC academic advisors for both their first and second years at RU.

Faculty advising is and will continue to be integral to our students' success. With student-faculty connections as a priority, faculty in colleges who have traditionally provided advising services for incoming students will continue to be assigned as co-advisors. The ASC team will work closely with faculty advisors to ensure we are embracing our students, creating intentional connections between students and their academic programs, and effectively supporting them through both ASC and faculty advising opportunities. All other students will also continue to receive services in their college-based advising centers or with faculty advisors who have been assigned to them from within the students' chosen program of study.

During the freshmen and sophomore years for students, the ASC team will work diligently to ensure effective communication and collaboration with faculty advisors while striving to create student connections with new faculty mentors in those colleges that do not traditionally link new students to faculty advisors. The ASC will work with every major within each department to identify faculty mentors as well as a faculty advising liaison. These liaisons will collaborate with ASC team members and their program's faculty advisors and mentors to share knowledge, skills, and experiences while serving as liaisons and ensuring strong channels of communication and connection are maintained among the ASC team, faculty, and students in their respective programs. I will work with the Academic Affairs Leadership Team over this academic year to determine how faculty advising liaisons will be specifically acknowledged for their service. The ASC team and I will work closely with our Faculty

Senate and meet with faculty from each and every academic program over the next several months to ensure we all have the information and open lines of communication we need to work together!

In 2021-2022, the ASC will be fully staffed when all of the professional advisors from each of the colleges join the team in Young Hall. At that time, all incoming students, including freshmen and transfer students, will be assigned to and served by the ASC team and co-faculty advisors. Sophomores (from the 2020-2021 incoming student cohort) will also continue to be provided with direct advising services by the ASC team. Beginning prior to and throughout Quest, faculty advising liaisons, faculty advisors and mentors, and the ASC team will work together to create intentional and multiple touchpoints with freshmen and sophomore students in their respective programs to ensure connections are made and relationships are built between students and faculty from the very beginning of each student's journey at RU. As students enter into their third year at RU, faculty advisors and mentors in the students' major will transition from co-advisors to primary academic advisors to our students.

In addition to consistent communication with each of you, I want to assure you that cross-training and professional development will be offered throughout the year for the ASC team and all faculty who currently serve or may be interested in serving as academic advisors and/or mentors to our students. These sessions will include training and collaborative conversations regarding advising models and approaches, the use of outreach/communication modalities to connect with students, and student resources and opportunities. The ASC will provide professional development focused on the evidence-based use of PathwayU and the College Student Inventory to determine and engage students in striving to attain their goals, evidence based communication and counseling practices, and the establishment of student success practices and programs.

We also look forward to inviting our colleagues to join us in the ASC to share information about academic programs and high impact opportunities to recruit and engage our students throughout the year. This is such an exciting and exceptional opportunity for us to share knowledge and skills with each other while strengthening the supports and services we all provide for our students!

I look forward to collaborating with each of you as we work to strengthen our students' experience at RU. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with questions, comments, and feedback as we move forward together to provide our students with every opportunity to engage, succeed, and thrive as Highlanders.

Respectfully and sincerely,



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