Introduction:

On April 30-May 1, 2013 a team of consultants from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) consisting of Casey Self (Arizona State University), Eric White (Penn State University) and Nancy King (Kennesaw State University) visited the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP). The charge to the consultants was to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth assessment of the university's academic advising program. Specifically the charge asked that the consulting team address the following key areas:

- The need for a strategic plan for campus-wide advising and identification of models that would retain the best of the institution's current practices and address the challenges that exist
- Advising load issues
- Advisor training
- Orientation issues
- The need for technical solutions for collecting, monitoring, and directing the student advising process

Before our visit to the campus, we were provided a great deal of information regarding the university, the four individual colleges, and the academic advising program that currently exists. In addition to the days we spent on the UWSP campus, we found these resources we were provided in advance of our visit to be very helpful in determining what is presently in place. In particular, we noted from the materials we received that there have been several reports generated in the past that made some excellent recommendations regarding the advising program that have not been implemented.

The itinerary for our campus visit included meetings with key stakeholders that play a role in UWSP's academic advising program and student success. The individuals and groups we met with included the following: the Planning Team for advising who coordinated our visit; Dan Kellogg (Registrar/Enrollment Management); Greg Summers, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs; two groups of students; James Sage and Nancy Lopatin-Lummis, First-Year Seminar and General Education Program; two Faculty Forums; Peer Advisors/Mentors; David Hastings, Faculty Development; the Student Academic Advising Center (SAAC); informal advising units—Residential Living, Tutoring Center, Disability Services, International Studies, Diversity and College Access; Career Services; Professional Advisors from across campus; Deans Cirmo, Thomas, Morin and Moy; Orientation staff; and the Summer Task Force.

Framework of Consultants' Visit:

It is important to clarify the consultants' perspective on academic advising as a preface to our general observations and recommendations. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) has endorsed three documents that address the philosophy and practice of academic advising: *NACADA Concept of Academic Advising, NACADA Statement of Core Values, and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education: Standards and Guidelines for Academic Advising.* Links to each of these documents may be found on NACADA's website: www.nacada.ksu.edu/resources/standards.htm

Advising programs that are considered "best practices" in the field will reflect the advising philosophy contained in these three documents. For the purpose of framing the context of our review of UWSP's advising program, the following points address our major assumptions about successful academic advising:

- Academic advising is best viewed as a form of teaching and is integral to the success of the teaching and learning mission of higher education institutions. As Marc Lowenstein (2005) observes, "an excellent advisor does the same thing for the student's entire curriculum that the excellent teacher does for one course." Advisors teach students to value the learning process, to apply decision-making strategies, to put the college experience into perspective, to set priorities and evaluate events, to develop thinking and learning skills, and to make informed choices.

- The NACADA *Concept of Academic Advising* identifies three essential components of advising: curriculum (what advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising delivers the curriculum), and student learning outcomes (the result of academic advising). These student learning outcomes are based upon what we want students to know, to be able to do, and to value and appreciate as a result of the academic advising process.

- Best practices in advising programs consistently address three issues. First, it is critical that both professional advisors and faculty advisors receive adequate training and professional development opportunities. The training needs to be ongoing, not simply a one-time session, and it should include five major areas of concern to advisors: the conceptual, informational, relational, technological and personal elements of advising. Secondly, there must be appropriate rewards and recognition for advisors. Thirdly, it is critical that the advising program includes an assessment plan. Like training, assessment is not a one-time event. It must also go beyond student satisfaction surveys in order to determine if the learning outcomes for advising are being achieved by students.

- Finally, we are convinced that, when done well, academic advising has a significant impact on student success as reflected in an institution's retention and graduation rates.

General Observations:

In this section of the report, we identify the strengths and challenges that we believe exist at UWSP that impact the advising program. The order of these strengths and challenges are not presented in any specific priority.

Strengths:

- The fact that UWSP has chosen to conduct this intensive review of advising is a strong indication that the University truly cares about providing the very best advising experience for its students.

- Clearly there are many individuals at UWSP who care deeply about students and want very much to facilitate their success in college and beyond.

- Although there are certainly inconsistencies in the quality of academic advising across campus, there are indeed pockets of outstanding advising being provided by both professional and faculty advisors.

- It appears UWSP clearly communicates through the student online portal who the assigned academic advisor is for each student.

- UWSP has recently initiated university-wide enrollment management strategies with identified individuals spearheading these efforts.

- Academic advising is now housed in academic affairs as opposed to student affairs. This is a positive message regarding advising begin connected to the academic mission of the institution.

- There are several key student support units at UWSP (Career Services, Residential Living, Tutoring Center, Disability Services, International Studies, Diversity and College Access) that demonstrated high levels of support for strong academic advising programs.

- A renewed emphasis on the first-year experience and an understanding of how it aids student retention and success are evident.

- There appears to be a strong commitment on the part of the academic deans to improving academic advising at UWSP.

- SPACADA, an informal advising community that meets regularly, is an excellent communication tool for advisors across campus.

- The Peer Advising/Mentoring program that is employed in several areas throughout the campus is working well.

Challenges:

- UWSP has experienced an exceptional degree of turnover in key leadership roles over several years.

- There is no clarity or consensus on who is ultimately responsible for academic advising at UWSP.   There is no common understanding of an individual or office that is designated as being in charge regarding academic advising initiatives.

- There is currently no strategic plan that outlines the mission and goals of academic advising or the rationale behind the way it is currently structured.

- Clearly there are inequities in advising loads among both faculty and professional advisors.

- Advisor training is inconsistent across campus and there is no formalized professional development program with a common advising curriculum.   Although publications indicate the SAAC office is responsible for academic advisor training and development, there does not appear to be a system or adequate resources for SAAC to provide this critical component.

- Advising during first-year orientation and transfer orientation is inconsistent from department to department. In addition, what is termed "advising" during orientation appears to be simply "course selection."

- Technology is not giving sufficient support for collecting, monitoring and directing the student advising process. We understand that the university is considering a change in systems from the home-grown Student Information System currently in use, and that will hopefully help with some of the advising issues the institution is currently facing.

- There does not seem to be any reward or recognition for academic advisors who do an outstanding job. In particular, faculty advisors are not given any credit for advising as an extension of teaching in the Promotion and Tenure process. Instead advising is viewed simply as service and carries very little weight in promotion and tenure decisions.

- There is no assessment of the effectiveness of academic advisors or the advising program. In fact, we heard several times that it "is not possible to assess the effectiveness of advising except in a very superficial manner." Clearly this statement is not supported by the research and literature on academic advising and assessment.

- A consistent concern expressed by many individuals related to the availability of specific classes students need to stay on track for graduation.   Science courses were mentioned most often as not being available to allow students to maintain a normal sequence to meet   curricular expectations.

- Class scheduling/availability appears to be significantly controlled by when faculty choose to teach or offer courses and not by what is needed to meet student needs. We were told there are very few courses even offered on Fridays or evenings due to faculty not wanting to teach during these times.   This model will be extremely challenging to enrollment management individuals if they have no role in determining which courses are needed and at what times.

- The recent changes related to the new General Education curriculum have created stress for many individuals and offices because of the lack of understanding of new requirements, and which students should move or not move to the new curriculum. Confusion also exists on who is responsible for educating students and staff on the new curriculum.

- Students and parents do not have a reliable source of information to access degree requirements and specific courses needed to graduate. It was mentioned on several occasions that some majors will require more than 120 credit hours to graduate because of pre-requisite courses not being included in graduation requirements.   It may be misleading and a misrepresentation to students and parents if they are not being notified of exactly what courses a student will need to complete to graduate in a specific major.

- The SAAC does not appear to have significant connections/relationships with individuals providing academic advising in the colleges.

Recommendations For Each Charge Identified:

Charge #1- Strategic plan for campus-wide advising and identification of models:

- **Create an institutional vision, mission, goals and learning outcomes that apply across the university and provide for a common purpose and understanding of advising among all stakeholders.**

  The UWSP academic advising program will benefit greatly from a shared mission and set of goals for academic advising and a clear set of expected outcomes for student learning. To be most effective the development of these critical elements is best achieved by having all constituents involved in the discussion and creation of the vision, mission and goals of academic advising. Certainly there will need to be central coordination and leadership in this endeavor; however, there must be input from all units of the university advising program for there to be campus-wide "buy-in."

  Guidelines for developing an academic advising vision and mission statement, goals and outcomes can be found in Chapter 14 of *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook" (2008)* and at
  http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Advisingissues/Mission. Statements.htm

- **Determine college specific advising goals and outcomes that complement those agreed upon at the institutional level.**

  While campus-wide coordination helps to ensure consistency of advising philosophy and practice, it is also possible to recognize the academic units' unique curricula, faculty, structure, and student experience. A fully decentralized campus model like that at UWSP respects the autonomy of units; however, unless carefully coordinated, such a model can result in a loosely structured advising system that is valued differently within each academic unit and/or across the institution. For example, in some areas advising is viewed as a more comprehensive activity while others may view it primarily as course scheduling.

  The decentralized organization at UWSP is not uncommon, but it becomes critical that specifically identified leadership is established to answer this basic question: "Who is responsible for advising at UWSP?"   There must be an individual identified who is ultimately accountable and has oversight to make certain that the various campus units identify advising mission, goals and learning outcomes compatible with those at the university level.

- **Establish a coherent and consistent model for the delivery of academic advising at UWSP**.

  We understand and appreciate the decentralized administrative structure at UWSP and believe that your academic advising program should reflect this structure. Operationally this means that the deans are free to deliver academic advising as they see fit given their resources, both human and fiscal, their philosophies of who should be advising, and any other compelling issues that might impact their decisions.,

  Currently three of the colleges operate from an "advising center" model where the first- and second-year students (or those students who have not officially entered a major) are advised by a professional advisor, peer advisor, and some faculty. After the students have declared majors, they are then reassigned to faculty in their respective departments. This model appears to be working. The professional advisors are dedicated to their work and supervise the peer advisors closely.

  The College of Letters and Science should move more in this direction. While the model of a professional academic advisor in the Biology department has been adopted, she is often overwhelmed by the sheer number of students who want to study biology. A recommended model would be to hire a few professional advisors, perhaps use peer advisors for support, and any faculty who enjoy working with this student population. All incoming and pre-major students would be assigned to the advisors in this college advising center. Once the student has settled on a major, the student at the start of the junior year could be transferred over to a faculty advisor in the appropriate department. This model accommodates first and second-year students who often are not set on their academic goals and at the same time allows faculty to advise those students that data have indicated they like to advise the most: those students who are in the faculty members' own chosen field and who will most likely succeed academically.

  At the junior/senior level deans, of course, with departments heads are free to use faculty advisors, professional advisors, or combinations of the two groups. When resources are limited or numbers are small, a possible model is to combine departments and have a professional advisor serve a few departments. Which faculty are assigned advising responsibility can be determined in many ways: using only those faculty who volunteer, but are also "rewarded" for taking on the advisor role, or an even distribution of advisees to all faculty. (At UWSP and other universities this approach has some built in flaws. Ultimately the distribution of advisees is never even as students seek out those advisors with positive reputations and abandon those who are perceived as not fulfilling

their advising roles adequately.) Senior faculty members sometimes make good advisors since their research responsibilities might be winding down.   Likewise, the use of retired faculty can also be beneficial.

- **Maintain the Student Academic Advising Center (SAAC) within the advising structure of UWSP.**

  The viability of SAAC at UWSP is a pertinent issue as UWSP reexamines how it delivers academic advising. SAAC serves primarily exploratory (undecided) students and students who have been referred to the Center when they are not performing adequately in their majors or are rethinking their academic goals.

  Best practices in academic advising encourage the housing of these types of students within a separate unit outside the structure of the disciplinary colleges. Such a model gives the students an "academic" home and enables the advisors to direct students to any appropriate majors throughout the institution.

  The SAAC enjoys some of the benefits of such an approach. The students are advised by professional advisors who understand the needs of exploratory students.

  Although the Center is not an officially recognized academic unit of enrollment for the exploratory students (these students are actually enrolled in the College of Letters and Arts), the model appears, for the most part, to be working.

  The majority of students, professional advisors and faculty who were interviewed related positive attitudes toward the work of the Center and its advisors. Some concerns about the fluctuation of workload (perhaps the result of too much identification of advising with the registration process) and the inability of the Center staff to take on additional assignments because of workload were expressed.

  These needs should be dealt with over time, but given that approximately 20 percent of entering students into UWSP are exploratory, any efforts now to dismantle the Center would be ill advised.

- **Rethink the concept of mandatory advising at UWSP**

While the concept of mandatory advising may sound appealing on the surface and may even seem like a best practice for the advising endeavor, there are many underlying problems with the policy which, in fact, hinder the development of a substantive academic advising program. Of course, the appeal of such a policy is that a "forced" contact between the student and the advisor is better than no contact at all. Many universities complain of students who seemingly want to avoid advisors and thus having such a policy assures that students are seen by an advisor and that important exchanges can occur.

The down side of this approach is that both student and advisor tend to equate advising with registration since the time for this "forced" contact is typically established just before a student can register for the next semester. One of the most significant emphases of NACADA leadership has been to diminish this connection and to impress upon the higher education community that academic advising is, in fact, part of the teaching endeavor. It was the rare student at UWSP who saw an advisor outside of the designated time on the registrar's time table.

While contacts are made with advisors, these meetings are often rushed and perfunctory. Students quite naturally leave this contact to the last minute. As a result many students are vying for a few available time slots with advisors in order to register as early as possible. Advisors are often the gate keepers who must allow the student access to the registration system. Advisors back up with many students to see in a short period when little more can be accomplished than to confirm the schedule that the student might have selected.

Still less desirable, such a policy can lead to--as reported many times during our visit to UWSP--an advisor sending an email to his students which simply clears all students for registration, leaving only those who truly wanted an appointment to schedule one. Surely, this is not the intent of mandatory advising.

Unfortunately mandatory advising is a misnomer and we are closer to the reality if it were called mandatory registration or course scheduling. At a more basic level, the message that students often receive, although they may be glad that they are reminded of their registration time, is that they cannot be trusted to access an advisor when there is a need to meet with an advisor.   Finally, we recommend that the appropriate personnel continue with mandatory advising for any group of students that they specify.

An advisor should be free to even single out an individual that has not been seen for a long period of time.

At the more substantive level, the UWSP academic advising community needs to educate both students and advisors that advising is more than getting a schedule approved and that students are free to access their advisors as often as they wish to discuss matters that go beyond simply scheduling classes.   Removing the mandatory aspects of advising does not diminish the need for a student to see an advisor and, in fact, when done well, students will access their advisors on a more regular basis than once a semester to plan a schedule routine. When a student chooses to see an advisor and consequently is pleased with that encounter, it is more likely that additional contacts will occur. Thus it is a student's responsibility to act maturely within the context of academic advising and the responsibility of advisors, both professional and faculty, to provide the very best academic advising that they can.

Charge #2 - Advising load issues:

- **Address the issue of inequities in advising load that exists across campus.**

    Currently there are significant inequities in advising load from college to college. Advising at UWSP is primarily delivered by faculty with a few professional advisors and the use of peer advisors/mentors. Ideally there would be resources to provide each college with some full-time advisors to assist faculty as enrollment warrants. In addition, UWSP may consider identifying a cadre of faculty within each college who are willing to assume a larger advising load in lieu of extensive research or campus-wide service in other areas. There are faculty who view advising as an extension of their teaching role who would be very agreeable to assuming a larger advising load with the understanding that their advising will be considered in promotion and tenure decisions. Currently the outstanding advisors in the colleges receive a larger load by default (and with no reward) when students elect to move from advisors who are less invested in advising.

    Advisor load NACADA Clearinghouse –
    http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/Search-Results.aspx?q=advisor%20load

Charge #3 - Advisor training:

- **Create a comprehensive, on-going training program for advisor development.**

  One key component of a strong academic advising program is a consistent, comprehensive training and development program which addresses the needs of academic advisors who are brand new to the profession, as well as those who continue in the profession for years. Regardless of who provides academic advising on campus (faculty, full-time advisors, peers), it should be an expectation that these individuals receive the training and continuous development necessary to maintain quality academic advising. Key elements of an academic advisor development/training program take into consideration the college-wide vision, mission, goals and student learning outcomes. As a program is further developed and refined, the various topics should be arranged in a way that addresses the major areas included in a comprehensive approach to advisor training and development. They are:
  1. *Conceptual elements:* concept of advising, mission and role of advising, relationship between advising and retention, student success, student learning outcomes, advising as teaching, ethical issues in advising
  2. *Informational elements:* programs, advising model, policies, curriculum, referral resources, advising tools including technologies, FERPA
  3. *Relational elements:* interview skills, communication skills, rapport building, inter-and intra-cultural communication skills needed when working with a diverse student population
  4. *Technology elements:* knowledge of technology and its functions is critical for academic advisors to perform their job well. An understanding of and skill in the use of technological resources is equally important in regard to conceptual and informational understanding
  5. *Personal elements:* an understanding of self (as an advisor) requires not just knowledge about one's values and levels of concentration, stress, emotions, commitment, etc., but rather an ongoing awareness of self and the application of skills in self-assessment, self-regulation and growth.

  There are many NACADA resources available for developing training and professional development programs. See a listing of resources at:
  http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/advisingissues/adv training.htm

- **Establish a University-wide Advising Council**

This Council should be staffed with a rotating cadre of faculty who advise, professional advisors, administrators, students, and other University personnel who have a vested interest in quality academic advising. In most cases, membership can be on a rotating basis, although some individuals by virtue of their positions could have a permanent appointment to the Council. The chairperson for the Council should come from the office where oversight responsibility for academic advising has been placed.

This Council should be under the auspices of the highest ranking officer at the University as possible. It should be a permanent Council of the University and most, if not all, issues related to academic advising at the University, should be referred to the Council. The Council should recommend policy and procedure changes and deal with all issues that come forth either from students, advisors, or the administration.

The challenge of providing quality academic advising is an ongoing effort. New student characteristics, increased use of technologies, and a changing curriculum require an advising system that can change as readily. A University-wide Advising Council can be both reactive and proactive in its approach. It can take on assignments from the Chancellor, Provost, the Associate Vice Chancellor or from faculty government and/or it can create its own agenda as well. It can "hear testimony" on particular issues and solicit suggestions for improvements. It should also make recommendations to the individual designated as responsible for the work of the Council.

Topics for discussion should be wide-ranging. Priorities should be established once an agenda is developed. It is recommended that the first items for the Council should be relatively easy to implement within a reasonable amount of time. These earliest initiatives that are implemented should demonstrate to the University community that the Council can come up with workable ideas.

This Council could be charged with coordinating the process to recommend the mission statement for academic advising and the strategic plan for academic advising. It could also oversee activities to delineate the role of advisors and advisees, to coordinate an annual advisor award and celebration ceremony, and to set priorities and deadlines.

The basic function of the Council should be to recommend policy and procedure to those who have the authority for implementation. Advising Councils have been in existence for over two decades and have shown themselves to be a best practice. Such

an approach allows the advising community to address issues methodically, with guidance from administration as to which initiatives should take priority. Over time this approach will show itself to be effective in handling matters of importance to the academic advising community

- **Develop an assessment program for both the advising program and for advisors. Current data sources for assessing student success will help inform advising decisions, program implementation, and resource allocation. It will also be important to receive feedback from both students/faculty/staff along with follow-up focus groups.**

    Assessment is complex and simply put consists of an on-going cycle of activity that is based upon the advising program's mission, goals, and outcomes. It involves gathering a variety of information and data and using this feedback for the improvement of program or individual performance. Assessment should be a team effort with faculty, staff, and administrators actively engaged. Finally, assessment is a critical component of any plan that focuses on improvement and accountability.

    We would suggest that professional development on the topic of assessment be provided with the involvement of the office of institutional research. In addition, an institutional team could be charged with developing a plan while attending the NACADA Assessment Institute. This annual Institute provides the opportunity for team members to develop a plan while working closely with nationally known experts in the field of advising assessment. Extensive resources on assessment can be found at http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/links/assessment.htm

- **Provide an intentional Recognition/ Reward system to acknowledge the importance of advising and to reward advisors who do an excellent job.**

    For some advisors the intrinsic rewards of contributing to students' growth and success and the satisfaction of teaching both inside and outside the classroom are enough. However, we strongly recommend providing extrinsic rewards and recognition as well. Because UWSP is primarily a faculty advising model, we suggest a number of possible approaches. First—and most importantly—the university should include outstanding advising in a faculty advisor's promotion and tenure process. As UWSP moves forward in adopting the view of advising as teaching, clearly advising will need to be moved from "Service" in the Promotion and Tenure document to "Teaching." Other suggestions for rewarding faculty who agree to take on a larger advising load include: a course release perhaps once a year, a reduction in non-instructional load such as committee assignments, and perhaps an additional stipend for advising during the summer

orientations. Clearly all advisors on campus need to be recognized by the administration for the important work they do. In addition, nominating outstanding advisors, both faculty and professional advisors, for national awards through NACADA is strongly suggested.

Charge #4 - Orientation issues:

- **Academic advising experience at orientation programs should be consistent with academic year experience.**

  The orientation experience is critical for each new student and parent/family who are going through final stages of deciding which institution to enroll, knowing what resources and services the institution will provide such as financial support, housing, etc.   A major component of this experience is meeting individuals or office teams who will be providing academic advising and support while meeting their academic goals.

  During our visit we learned that students and parents/families are not always meeting the academic advisors who will be assisting them when they return to campus for their first semester of classes.   It is highly recommended that students and parents/families be given the opportunity to meet with the assigned academic advisors from the academic units the students will be enrolled.

  Use of terminology for orientation programs should also communicate to students and parents/families that the primary function academic advisors will be supporting during orientation will be the registration component.   Other more holistic components of academic advising will occur throughout the academic experience.   The unintended message that advising is only connected to the registration process is inaccurate and misleading.

  Preparing Advisors for Orientation Programs:
  http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Preparing-academic-advisors-for-orientation-programs.aspx

- **Academic Advising should play a primary role at orientation programs.**

  We heard discussions about the possibility of moving towards a one-day orientation program instead of a two-day program currently in place. Students we spoke with indicated the two-day program was too much to handle and they lost their focus. If UWSP chooses to move towards a one-day program, it is imperative that students continue to spend an appropriate amount of time with academic colleges and academic advisors. Colleges need ample time to prepare students for the registration process by covering general college requirements and meeting key college personnel.

  Students should also be given the opportunity to learn how the registration process works during orientation, so they are able to make appropriate changes to their schedule when needed. It appears students currently do not utilize the same registration process at orientation that will be expected of them in the future. In our meetings with UWSP students, they indicated tremendous frustrations with the orientation registration process.

- **Advising Syllabus Introduction**

  Once UWSP has completed the very first recommendation regarding an overall vision, mission and learning objectives related to academic advising, it is recommended that academic advising syllabi be created. These syllabi may be institution-wide or college specific advising syllabi. Advising syllabi can be a terrific resource for educating new students and their families to the objectives and goals of academic advising, as well as the expectations of students in the academic advising process. The advising syllabi we reviewed that already exist in some UWSP units were strong, but they were very specific to the unit, and not tied into a university-wide vision and mission.

  The NACADA Clearinghouse has excellent resources and examples for creating academic advising syllabi at: http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Creating-an-Advising-Syllabus.aspx.

Charge #5 - Technical solutions:

- Several individuals mentioned that UWSP will be moving towards a new Student Information System in the near future. It was also communicated that the rest of the University of Wisconsin system utilizes PeopleSoft. Advisor access to pertinent student records is critical in providing accurate, reliable advising. If at all possible, include individuals who provide advising functions in the process of implementing your new student information system, and then have those individuals become the key trainers for other advisors on utilizing the new system.

- UWSP currently utilizes a Degree Progress Report (DPR) but it is evident this system has limitations, including the inability for students to run "what-if" audits to see how their current completed courses could apply to other majors. Moving towards an updated automated degree audit system could enhance overall student and advisor satisfaction. This would also help with the issue of some majors not documenting exactly what requirements are needed to graduate in 120 credit hours. Automated degree audits will help monitor and regulate these requirements.

- It is critical that advisor's notes documenting all academic advising interactions with students be accessible to advisors across the institution. This type of record keeping and information would help academic advisors know what has previously been discussed with students, and would also help students feel a sense of consistency when visiting different advising offices. Ideally, this would be part of the new Student Information System to be implemented in the near future. It should become an expectation that all academic advising interactions be documented by the advisor in this system.

- Academic advising units should keep specific advising contact data to validate student use of academic advising resources. Each unit, and the university as a whole, should be able to run weekly, monthly, and annual data to determine how many students met with an academic advisor, including the general reasons for the advising interaction. There are several options for purchasing a system that would meet this need who have vendor booths available at many NACADA conferences.

- As mentioned above, there were general comments and frustrations shared regarding the lack of a consistent resource to find specific degree requirements for all majors at UWSP. In addition, the frustration that departments are not required to count pre-requisites in the 120 credits needed to graduate was shared by both students and staff. UWSP needs to implement a web page resource that outlines the details for an eight-semester, four-year graduation plan for every degree offered. Departments should be transparent regarding the exact requirements needed for degree completion that is inclusive of general education and major/minor requirements.

Conclusion:

We very much enjoyed visiting the UWSP campus and appreciate the warm hospitality we received. Clearly the university has many talented faculty, staff, and administrators; and the students we met were, for the most part, satisfied with their college experience. We congratulate you on wanting to improve your academic advising program in order to better serve your students. Hopefully you will find our observations and recommendations helpful as you seek to make improvements in academic advising at UWSP. We applaud the university's interest in undertaking change on behalf of your students and we wish for you great success in this endeavor.