

Subject: Tandem Advising
From: Provost Lorenzo Smith and CAAR Leadership
To: InsideEWU
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Eastern Washington University Transitions to Tandem Academic Advising: A Collaborative Approach to Student Success

In a significant step to enhance academic support and student retention, Eastern Washington University is excited to announce the implementation of the Tandem Academic Advising model across campus this fall. The Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR) has been tasked with leading this initiative, one that is designed to meet the evolving needs of our students and foster a more supportive educational environment and experience.

What is Tandem Advising?

The tandem advising model is a shift away from the traditional split advising model we have been using. Under the new model, each student that has declared a major will be assigned both an academic advisor from CAAR and a faculty advisor from their major. This dual advising approach is intended to provide more holistic support, enabling students to benefit from the distinct expertise of their assigned advisors throughout their academic journey.

CAAR advisors will generally provide academic advising, planning and registration support; help students navigate campus resources; and assist with addressing other identified challenges to help improve their overall experience.

Faculty advisors will orient their expertise toward providing discipline-specific guidance, career mentoring and planning, exposing students to research and professional development opportunities, and engaging those planning to pursue a graduate education, among other areas.

This collaborative framework is expected to strengthen relationships between advisors and students, promote greater engagement and advocacy for student needs, and enhance student retention and success.

Impact on Students

The tandem advising model is expected to lead to improved student retention and graduation rates. By providing students with a more robust network of support, the university aims to close existing academic advising and support-related gaps and to ensure that access to advising is available year-round. Advisors will work closely with students to monitor their progress, develop timely and individualized interventions, and foster a sense of community.

To illustrate how this works in practice, here are examples from specific majors:

- Social Work students (Transfer):

Students entering with an AA/DTA are onboarded by CAAR during the summer through one-hour sessions that cover major requirements, campus support resources, key policies and procedures, and registration for the fall term. Students then transition to their faculty advisor for discipline-specific academic advising and planning, career mentoring and guidance on internships and professional

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opportunities — generally in their first quarter. The assigned CAAR and faculty advisors will continue to collaborate to address existing and anticipated issues as they arise.

- Mechanical Engineering students with 0 credits (First Time in College):

Students are onboarded by CAAR in the summer and remain with CAAR until they reach approximately 70 credits. During this time, students are encouraged to begin building relationships with their assigned faculty advisors until they matriculate. Assigned faculty advisors will then take the lead in providing discipline-specific advising and planning, while CAAR provides supplementary support—particularly for referrals to campus support services, Early Warnings, and other issues that may arise.

- Matriculated Running Start students with 45+ credits (Psychology):

Running Start students are generally onboarded earlier in the spring by CAAR. These students (and PSYC majors, in general), will continue to be advised by CAAR for general education, math, English, and foreign language requirements, while the PSYC department will provide discipline-specific advising and planning. Nonetheless, assigned CAAR and faculty advisors will continue working together to help ensure seamless transition, progression and success of students.

Looking Ahead

CAAR leadership is actively engaging college leadership to establish frameworks that will guide the implementation and long-term success of the tandem advising model across all colleges, including:

- College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (CSTEM)
- College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)
- College of Professional Programs (CPP)
- College of Health Science and Public Health (CHSPH) – implementation complete, in the refinement stage.

This initiative aligns with EWU's strategic vision of being student-centered and focusing on creating conditions informed by student needs.

Get Involved and Stay Informed

As implementation progresses, please expect periodic communication from CAAR leadership regarding successes and challenges.

Together, we can ensure that EWU remains a supportive and dynamic environment for all students, faculty and staff. Your involvement and support are vital as we move toward a future of enhanced academic success at EWU.

Sincerely,

Heather Veeder, Associate Vice President of Student Success, Policy, and Planning

Neron Thomas, Director of Center for Academic Advising and Retention (CAAR)

In collaboration with the Lorenzo Smith, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs