

**TO:** Deans & Vice President for Student Affairs

**FROM:** Chaouki Abdallah, Provost/EVP for Academic Affairs  
Greg Heileman, Associate Provost for Curriculum

**DATE:** September 28, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Review of Advising Structures/Job Titles and Staffing levels for Academic Affairs

**C:** Provost's Leadership Team  
Dorothy Anderson, VP for Human Resources  
Marleen Martinez, Director of HR Compensation  
Vanessa Harris, Director of University Advising

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We are preparing for our upcoming University accreditation visit, have aggressive goals to increase our retention and graduation rates, and are also facing budget challenges. We have therefore initiated a project to clarify and standardize our advising units to ensure that each school/college has consistent organizational structures and support, and that we are meeting our students' needs while also being budget conscious. Our need to be in strict compliance with FERPA regulations for student data access and the new FLSA regulations with regard to exempt vs. non-exempt classifications gave us additional rationale to embark on this project immediately.

Our initial analysis revealed that there are approximately 130 individuals at UNM with 14 different job titles that have "academic advising" in their job description. For a number of reasons, this is problematic. Most importantly, it is confusing to our students. It also means that the criteria for our staff that hold these titles in terms of roles/responsibilities/authority are not applied consistently. We must clarify for college and student affairs leadership, staff in these roles and for our students who they can go to for academic advising versus coaching and mentoring support. Additionally, there is no specific mention in the job descriptions that FERPA training is a requirement for individuals to work in these roles. This creates a significant liability for the University if individuals have access to data without the proper training.

With our director of advising, chief of staff and HR compensation, we are evaluating, streamlining and updating the relevant job descriptions. We will be seeking advice from a number of individuals within your organizations and ask that you support their efforts.

We do anticipate that this has the potential to impact staff in your organization so we are committed to bringing recommendations to each dean or their designee before changes are implemented.

We appreciate your support of this important initiative and please pass on this communication to relevant staff within your organization. You may contact Greg Heileman or Melissa Vargas with specific questions.