

TRENT UNIVERSITY

From the Registrar's Office to the Front Line:

Collaborating with Academic Advising to Improve Student Success

MELANIE BUDDLE, PHD
TINA FRIDGEN, MSC

TRENT UNIVERSITY

Talk outline

- ❖ We will introduce Trent and the academic and administrative structures that are at work within.
- ❖ Share our research on the value of collaborating between advising and registrar staff.
- ❖ Last we will give some examples of how our collaboration has worked to help us help our Trent students more effectively!



TRENT UNIVERSITY

Small University

Peterborough Campus:

- 1,450-acres straddling the Otonabee River in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, a vibrant mid-sized city 90 minutes from Toronto
- 6,784 Undergraduate students
- 480 Graduate students
- 603 International students from more than 100 countries

Durham Campus:

- New and improved facility in Oshawa opened its doors to students in September 2010
- 856 Students





TRENT UNIVERSITY

Flexible Degrees

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN BIOLOGY

14.0 credits in the program (excluding 1.0 credit) **Students must satisfy the University degree requirements (see 1.1.1)**

- The same course may not simultaneously satisfy the requirements of both programs in a semester degree.
- A minimum grade of 60% in each of BSC, 1020N and 1020P is required for the Honours or General degree in Biology.

The single major Honours program, 20.0 credits

including the following 1.0 credit:

- 3.0 BSC credits consisting of BSC, 1020N, 1020P, 1060N, 2000N, 2010N, 2200N, and 2003N
- 0.5 BSC credit in addition to the above
- 1.0 CHEM credit consisting of CHEM 1000N and 1020N
- 14.0 science credits per required for the Honours degree, including 1.0 MATH credit

The joint major Honours program, 20.0 credits

including the following 1.0 credit:

- 3.0 BSC credits consisting of BSC, 1020N, 1020P, 2000N, 2010N, 2200N, and 2003N
- 0.5 BSC credit in addition to the above
- 1.0 CHEM credit consisting of CHEM 1000N and 1020N
- 11.0 science credits per required for the General degree, including 1.0 MATH credit

The single major General program, 15.0 credits

including the following 1.0 credit:

- 3.0 BSC credits consisting of BSC, 1020N, 1020P, 2000N, 2010N, 2200N, and 2003N
- 0.5 BSC credit in addition to the above
- 1.0 CHEM credit consisting of CHEM 1000N and 1020N
- 11.0 science credits per required for the General degree, including 1.0 MATH credit

The joint major General program, 15.0 credits

including the following 1.0 credit:

- 3.0 BSC credits consisting of BSC, 1020N, 1020P, 2000N, 2010N, 2200N, and 2003N
- 0.5 BSC credit in addition to the above
- 1.0 CHEM credit consisting of CHEM 1000N and 1020N
- 11.0 science credits per required for the General degree, including 1.0 MATH credit

The minor in Biology consists of the following 3.0 credits

- 3.0 BSC credits consisting of BSC, 1020N, 1020P, 2000N, 2010N, 2200N, and 2003N
- 0.5 BSC credit in addition to the above

SPECIALIZATION IN CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

Program Coordinator:
B. Wilson, BSc, MEd, PhD (Adjunct)

The Specialization in Conservation Biology is designed to provide students with theoretical and practical training in the conservation of living organisms. It complements, in part, on the regional and national conservation efforts of the province of Ontario and the National System of Parks, the National System of Natural Resources, the Ontario Zoo, and regional Conservation Authorities. It provides the student with an opportunity for an internship with a participating agency.

Note:
• BSC 4802N Internship in Conservation Biology. Students must apply in the academic year before enrollment in the course. Applications can be obtained online at www.trentu.ca/conservation. Enrollment is limited and competitive.

Courses
(Including students who have fulfilled the requirements for a major or joint-major Honours degree in Biology may elect for a Specialization in Conservation Biology. They must successfully complete the following 12 credits:

- 2.0 BSC credits consisting of BSC-CIBC 2003N, 2003R, BSC, 3020N, and 4802N
- 1.0 BSC credit consisting of BSC 4802Y (must apply by April in the year of enrollment)
- 3.0 credits from the following:

| | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| BSC 2903N | BSC-CIBC 4020N |
| BSC 3020N | BSC-CIBC 4030N |
| BSC 3020R | BSC-CIBC 4030R |
| BSC 3102N | BSC 4020N |
| BSC 3102R | BSC 4020R |
| BSC 3102H | BSC-CIBC 2100N (2003N) |
| BSC 3202N | BSC 1020N |
| BSC 3202H | BSC-CIBC 1020N |
| BSC 3202R | BSC-CIBC 1020R |
| BSC 3803N | BSC-CIBC 3010N (2003N) |
| BSC 3803R | BSC-CIBC 3010R (2003R) |
| BSC 3803H | BSC 3010N |
| BSC 3803R | BSC-CIBC 3010R |
| BSC 4112N | BSC-CIBC 4040N |
| BSC 4112R | BSC-CIBC 4040R |
| BSC 4112H | BSC-CIBC 4040H |
| BSC 4102N | BSC-CIBC 4050N (4003N) |
| BSC 4102R | BSC-CIBC 4050R (4003R) |
| BSC 4202H | BSC 4020H |

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Durham Campus in Oshawa

The Collegiate Model



Champlain College

Gzowski College

Lady Eaton College

Otonabee College

West Bank

East Bank

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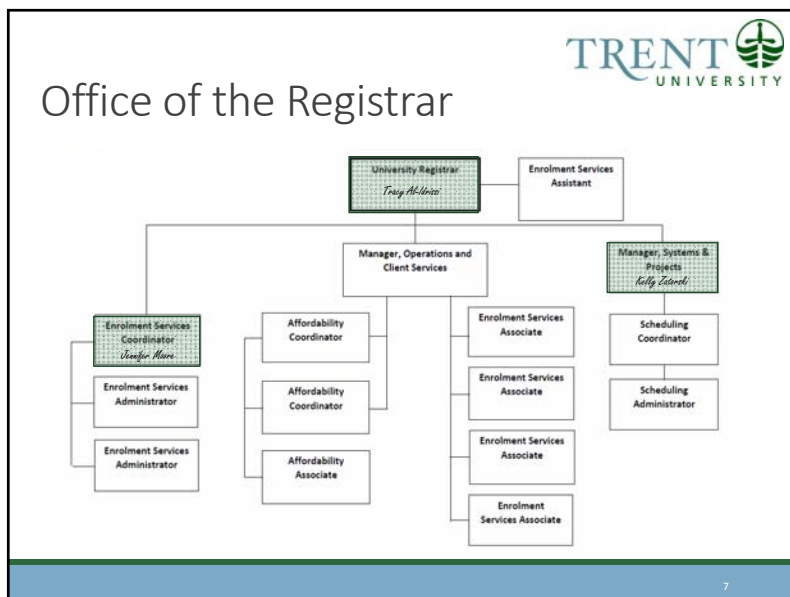
TRENT UNIVERSITY

The Collegiate Model

A college is meant to provide “facilities, programs, and opportunities for activities which will enable students from varied fields and backgrounds to mix and mingle, to learn from one another, and to ...benefit from a personal contact with members of faculty in other disciplines as well as their own.”

-Thomas H. B. Symons, founding President and Vanier Professor Emeritus, Trent University

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TRENT UNIVERSITY

Advising Models

Centralized: where professional and faculty advisors are housed in one academic or administrative unit

Decentralized: professional or faculty advisors are located in their respective academic departments

Shared: where some advisors meet with students in a central administrative unit (i.e., an advising center), while others advise students in the academic department of their major discipline

--Celeste F. Pardee (2004): *Organizational Structures for Advising*
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Organizational-Models-for-Advising.aspx>

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Our Model: Shared & Centralized

"A wide range of academic programs, high program selectivity, and complex graduation requirements increase the practicality of a centralized or shared model. In a central office it is easier for a coordinator to train advisors, thus ensuring that complex policies and program options are understood and accurately conveyed to students."

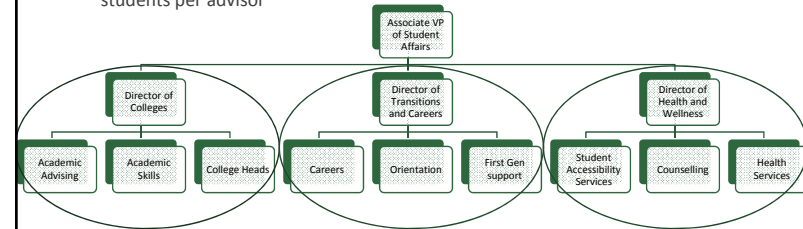
--Celeste F. Pardee (2004): *Organizational Structures for Advising*
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Organizational-Models-for-Advising.aspx>

This describes Trent University well, and explains why our model is effective.

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Academic Advising

- Six academic advisors: one in each of the Peterborough campus colleges, one at Durham college campus, and one to support downtown Peterborough college (and support Peterborough campus overflow)
- Separate locations but centralized in our reporting structure
- Each advisor sees approximately 48 students per week: case load approx. 1200 students per advisor



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What do academic advisors do?

We help you:

- CLARIFY** your academic goals
- DECIDE** which courses to take
- UNDERSTAND** academic regulations
- CONNECT** with the services you need
- TAKE CHARGE** of your education

One-on-one
appointments
with students

www.trentu.ca/advising

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What do academic advisors do?

- Petitions and appeals
- working with at-risk students who have been put on probation or suspended
- committee work including retention, orientation committees, communications, academic supports, and a non-voting seat on academic and policy committees
- when possible, providing advice to departments regarding policy and curriculum choices

Behind the scenes:
paperwork and
committee
responsibilities

www.trentu.ca/advising

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Centralized & Departmental Advising

Academic Advising

- One interdisciplinary unit with full-time staff and defined position -working one-on-one with students:
 - Deciphering University regulations/degree requirements
 - Assisting students with petitions
 - Course issues/ Difficulties completing term work
 - Choosing/Changing a major
 - Course selection/registration
 - Educational planning & Decision Making/Goal setting
 - Post-Grad options
 - Study abroad
 - Transfer credits
 - Withdrawal/Continue discussions

Departmental Coordinators

- Slightly different positions in different academic departments
- Some programs (ex. Nursing, Psychology) have a dedicated departmental advisor while others have faculty helping with advising and administrative staff helping with schedules, timetables, waivers etc.)
- Departmental coordinators are responsible for:
 - Helping maintain and explain departmental regulations
 - Pre-requisite waivers
 - Waitlists
 - Timetabling and scheduling
 - Maintaining (or clarifying) academic calendar copy

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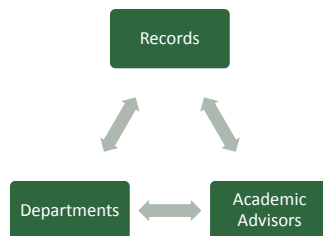
Shared Structures Work!

“There is growing recognition among advising professionals and researchers that a **shared structure can incorporate the best features** from the decentralized and centralized structures. An ideal shared structure would take advantage of the **expertise of faculty advising in their departments (decentralized), while relying on professional advisors** in a central administrative unit to meet the special needs of students, such as incoming freshmen, academically at risk students, minority students, student athletes, or undecided students.”

--Celeste F. Pardee (2004): *Organizational Structures for Advising*
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Organizational-Models-for-Advising.aspx>

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Working Together for Students



Questions:

What do these models look like in your campus?
 Where are academic advisors located?
 Who do they report to, in your institutions?

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Culture of Student Success

“Regardless of the primary reporting line for advising, the various institutional units must demonstrate a **strong commitment for collaboration**. Certainly effective advising programs contribute to a climate conducive to student success, but advising is not conducted in a vacuum. All units must work collaboratively to facilitate student success. **The silo approach, which still exists on many campuses, with its clear division between academic and student affairs, does not promote a culture of student success.** In contrast, the partnership approach is far more likely to produce the desired outcomes.”

--Nancy King (2011): *Implications for Advisor Reporting Lines*
<https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Implications-for-advisor-reporting-lines.aspx>

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What Makes Us Effective?

“As usual, **communication between offices is the key to effective collaboration**- and to improved learning for students.... When and how are students notified about registration, probation, and degree-completion issues? When and how are changes to the curriculum publicized? When is the academic calendar determined and the exam schedule set? And, how are these shared with the campus?”

--Maura M Reynolds (2009): *Developing a Good Working Relationship with the Registrar's Office* <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Developing-a-working-relationship-with-the-Registrars-Office.aspx>

What Makes Us Effective?

We work closely with the Office of the Registrar in three key areas:

- petitions/appeals
- degree requirements for graduating students
- registration issues for students

Let's review these areas separately and review and how we improved over the past 5 years.

Petitions and Appeals

- Committee on Undergraduate Petitions (CUP)
- Chaired by University Registrar: includes faculty and student representatives
- Types of petitions that need to be submitted through academic advisors to this committee include:
 - **Suspension petitions**
 - **Petitions for Late Withdrawal** (dropping a course after the drop deadline).
 - **Petitions for Exemption from Degree Requirements** or Exemption from academic regulations (typically filed by students who have not met university-level requirements needed to graduate).

Successes: Changes in Petitions

- **Streamlining petitions:** Other types of petitions that we advise students about but that do not require a signature from an academic advisor:
 - **First suspensions** (Fresh Start)
 - **Petition for Course Overload** (students are advised to discuss with an advisor)
- **Living documents:** Changing the wording and access to petitions helps to simplify the process for Students
 - **Final Grade Appeals** (submitted through Registrar's office as an online form, then sent to appropriate academic department)
 - **Petition for Late Add** (to add a course late: requires departmental signature and is submitted to the Committee on Undergraduate petitions)

Timelines

Timelines for the Registrar's office are not the same as timelines for advisors, for faculty or even, for students.

Deadlines are constantly being reviewed with the advising team to review options and best practice.

This builds respect and collaboration:

- **Late add date**
- **Grade release vs. registration deadlines**
 - Deregistration
 - Advisor availability
- **Suspension notification**

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Collaboration & Communication

“Direct communication between the personnel (in the) registrar's office and the advising office is important for the success of advising and of students.”

--Maura M Reynolds (2009): *Developing a Good Working Relationship with the Registrar's Office*

<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Developing-a-working-relationship-with-the-Registrars-Office.aspx>

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Degree Requirements

University-level rules:

- Students completing a BSc must have 1 MATH credit
- Students must have minimum number of 7 upper-year credits and maximum number of 7 first-year credits
- Minimum cumulative average required to graduate
- Minimum number of credits taken at home institution

Departmental rules:

- Required number of credits in the Major in order to graduate (different in different Majors)
- Requirements for specific courses (ex. all PSYC students must take 2000-level statistics courses and all business students must take 1000-level Economics courses)
- Requirements for specific grades (pre-requisites for moving forward in a program are 50% or 60% depending on department)

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Degree Requirements

Regular meetings and communication about the rules students petition most-provides us with a great place to:

- discuss rules that may be obstacles to student success
- review “why” the rules exist .

Some examples:

- **Breadth requirements:** are they doing what we want them to do?
- **Policies on course withdrawals and drop deadlines:** should we have more flexibility to ease our number of petitions around missed drop deadlines?
- **Rules about MATH requirements** that are slightly different in different departments: can we ask for more consistency?
- **Rules that academic departments set that seem inconsistent or confusing** (or that do not fall in line with university regulations): can we approach departments with recommendations?

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Degree Requirements

What have we been able to do about requirements or regulations that seem out of date or confusing?

- 1) **We talk about it as a group** (advisors, Registrar, Enrolment Services coordinator and sometimes also departmental advisors and coordinators): why is the rule there, how do we all interpret it; is it evenly applied?
- 2) **We decide who ought to take the next step** – ex. contacting departments to discuss an inconsistent or confusing departmental regulation; or going to a university senate committee with a suggestion for a rule change; or changing wording in the academic calendar to clarify how it is interpreted

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Degree Requirements: Successes

With advisor recommendations and the support of Registrar, we recommended:

- **a change in the minimum grade required** for 1000-level courses in a Major: this was passed by Senate committee that oversees changes to regulations

▪ **finding uniformity** in departmental and university requirements: this is a process but we are seeing some success

- **changes to notations on academic records** as a result of these conversations and considering changes to our course withdrawal policy

▪ **changes to calendar language** to facilitate understanding and reduce record keeping

Degree audits: automated and done by our amazing enrolment services staff

- faster and more timely
- Students advised to see advisors if they are not meeting requirements
- Feed back is shared between departments to help students understand results and ease anxiety

Planning software in the works:

- Flexible interdisciplinary degrees are hard to program into computers
- students will be soon be able to use a planning module to see how a course is counting towards departmental and university requirements
- what they have left to complete their degree –may limit questions about degree and departmental rules as it will be more transparent

Online change of Major forms:

- Allows students to see the options

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Registration Issues

Successes:

- Trent Schedule builder
- Online forms:
 - Pre-req waiver forms
 - Letter of permission (LOP)
- Transfer credit progress tracking

**Yes, we could go
on an on and on
and on....
But you get the
picture !**

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Summary: What Works for Us

1. **Communication between offices** is key to effective collaboration
2. **Old-school communication** (telephones and regular face-to-face meetings!) helps us resolve problems quickly and helps students
3. **Centralized model** means advisors have a birds-eye view of university regulations: comparing across disciplines means we more easily see inconsistencies in our policies
4. **Having a liaison person in Records and Registration** who communicates regularly with the advising team is a key asset and makes all of us more responsive to the needs of students
5. **Separate reporting lines** (Student Services for Advisors, Registrar for enrolment services staff) means we have an arms-length but collaborative framework that dismantles “silos” but allows us space to speak freely about a wide range of university procedures, degree regulations, and other policies that might be seen differently when they move from the Registrar’s office to the front line. The overall shared goal: working together to improve student success

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Suggestions

From Maura M. Reynolds, "Developing a Good Working Relationship with the Registrar's Office (2009):

-- **Staff from the Registrar's Office could be invited to make a presentation** at advising workshops or brown bag lunches; their expertise in working with the college or university's registration system or in creating and maintaining degree audits could be shared with advisors for great benefit.

--**Understanding the time line of the registrar's office would be beneficial for advisors:** When and how are students notified about registration, probation, and degree-completion issues? When and how are changes to the curriculum publicized? When is the academic calendar determined and the exam schedule set? And, how are these shared with the campus?

--**If the college or university has an advising council which meets periodically, inviting staff from the registrar's office** to be members of the council is a wonderful way to ensure communication and to build bridges in support of student learning and success.

<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Developing-a-working-relationship-with-the-Registrars-Office.aspx>

Suggestions

"Advising administrators would be well served by meeting with their registrar to discuss issues of mutual concern and to explore areas for collaborative action.

Asking "What can advisors do to help the staff of the registrar's office work more effectively?" is a great conversation starter. It would not be surprising for advisors to learn that some of the same challenges they face ... are faced by the registrar's office staff as well. If advising administrators take time to explain their needs and their mission, the registrar may gain greater understanding of the importance of advising and realize that enhanced technology (like degree audit systems, which are labor-intensive for the registrar to create and maintain) can help advisors 'advise' rather than merely 'register.' "

-Maura M. Reynolds, "Developing a Good Working Relationship with the Registrar's Office (2009)"

Thank you!

Contact information:

Tina Fridgen:

cfridgen@trentu.ca

Melanie Buddle:

melaniebuddle@trentu.ca

Key References:

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