



January 30, 2017

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of Senior Leadership and the University, thank you for the investment of time and expertise to research, plan, and propose recommendations for how to improve the delivery of mentoring and advising to our students. All of us agree that the long-term impacts on student success are directly linked to the amount and quality of advising and mentoring our students receive. It is critical that we continue to work to improve mentoring and advising across majors and your work will help us move in that direction quickly.

First, let me say that your summary and recommendations are thorough and demonstrate the thoughtfulness your committee showed in creating a plan that will positively impact all Belmont students. By collecting and examining current institutional practices and working to provide opportunities to deliver research-based best practices we can certainly make decisions about how best to serve our students as they move through their academic programs.

More specifically, the Senior Leadership team agrees that we need to begin working on the following recommendations:

- Develop better resources and better communication regarding academic advising to help students prepare for the “transactional” aspect of advising and setting advising expectations
- Develop resources and opportunities for more “just-in-time” information on, and expectations for, academic advising
- Require each college to create and implement a First Year Advising and Mentoring Plan for new students to allow for multiple touch points and open the door for strong connections with faculty from the start of their academic career (Note: This also incorporates your suggestion that we collect current advising practices from each colleges.)
- Develop and implement required faculty and appropriate staff development options in advising and mentoring
- Implement surveys on academic advising to be distributed to all students following each advising period
- Include the Advising Module as part of Belmont’s NSSE participation
- Work on retitling the Faculty Qualifications tab (within Tk20) from “Academic Advising” to “Mentorship and Academic Advising”
- Formation of a University council on advising

To begin, Dr. Gill and I will work with Dr. Linda Holt and Ms. April Hefner to develop the advising council membership which will include members from the Vision 2020 Working Group

on Advising and Mentoring as well as from various campus stakeholders (Office of the Registrar, Teaching Center, Library and Information Technology Services (LITS), GPS, BELL Core, Faculty Senate, Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (OAIR), and the Provost Council). Our initial goal for this committee will be to begin the implementation of the items delineated above, as well as to further investigate the committee's recommendations on advising workloads and the advising/registration processes at the University. My hope is that by the time we reach the fall 2017 priority registration (in the spring of 2017) we will have developed some additional on-line resources for students and faculty; that we will have established a pilot "just-in-time" advising opportunity for students; and that we will have received, and be helping to develop, college-level advising programs to be implemented in the summer 2017 orientation program.

I'm sure that you will agree that much work needs to be done to make progress on these recommendations and to serve our students. Both Dr. Gill and I are extremely excited about this shared work as we move forward developing improved and more effective advising and mentoring programs across the University.

With sincere appreciation,

*Thomas*

Thomas D. Burns, Ph.D.  
Provost