



Request for 2026 Funding Services and Activities Fee Committee

BUDGET PROPOSAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Department Name: University Academic Advising

Create Date: 01/30/2026

Due Date: 02/06/2026

Submitter Name: Jennifer Mitchell

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Department Head Approval:

Department Head: Will Taylor

Requested Amount: **\$12,336**

Departmental Information

STUDENT UTILIZATION

We are requesting \$12,336 in funding to make this high-impact, low-cost program whole in paying the salaries of the Student Advising Mentors (SAMs). With the funding crises we are experiencing and the minimum wage continuously increasing, we find ourselves requesting an increase of funds to make sure the program is fully funded and that drop-in hours remain available to students. These students serve not only as SAMs, but also are the first face that visitors see coming into the suite when they come to meet with any one of the five departments currently housed within- University Academic Advising, Office of Global Affairs, Office of Undergraduate Education, Legal Pathways, and Career Development & Education.

For the SAMs, there is a multi-pronged benefit to students - 1) There is leadership development, professional experience, and connection to the university for the SAMs; 2) support to students related to registration, advising, and resources; 3) assistance for advisors who are capacity constrained. All of these things together help UAA to bring the best service to the students that we can.

In the past few years, we have faced a need to request funds each year for the SAM salaries. This year is no exception. Because the departmental budget has been cut year over year, we have been told that there is likely no permanent funding for the 2026-2027 year for the SAMs. While temporary funding does exist, it is not promised, and the amount varies each year.

CORE VALUES/MISSION ALIGNMENT

Student Advising Mentors work in direct support of the retention of students, delivering support in a cost-efficient and pedagogically sound way that is integral to the success of UW Tacoma's Strategic Plan and can be successfully linked to each goal, specifically:

- **Students**

- Student Advising Mentors allow greater flexibility in the range and depth of UAA's support for students and the quality of experiences available to them outside the classroom by enabling us increase students' accessibility to services. As frontline support, they're able to help "remove institutional barriers to student progress" and be a part of the infrastructure by being available on a drop-in basis to provide information on campus resources and make appropriate referrals to support services as necessary. The SAMs engage in the "shared responsibility for student responsibility and success" in small and large ways. They reach out to unregistered students almost every quarter via a calling campaign to engage them in peer to peer conversation. They are a key part of ensuring that "every student has opportunities to engage in high impact practices." Finally, they are often the front door desk that people come to for help, not only for the five offices in our suite, but for many students looking for answers from departments across campus.

- **Equity**

- SAMs reflect the diverse student population not universally reflected across campus faculty and staff. Connecting with peers in a mentorship capacity that models themselves helps foster students' connection to campus and improve the satisfaction of traditionally underrepresented students, especially racial/ethnic minority students, with the UW Tacoma experience. The SAMs connect and have "conversations (that) enhance a culture of inclusive excellence, mutual respect, and social justice."

- **Vitality**

- Employing SAMs permits UAA to meet anticipated enrollment growth, continue high-impact outreach and programming efforts. By SAMs absorbing some of the general advising workload, advisors are better equipped to focus on intentional outreach and institutional retention efforts. This is especially important for advisors, as they, by far, have the greatest caseloads on campus (320:1 for UAA, approximate average of 140:1 across all majors).

SAF-FUNDED PROGRAM OR SERVICES GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The work UAA does across campus to increase student success is complex and cannot be done in isolation. Student Advising Mentors represent the department at campus-wide events - Admitted Student Day, Student Involvement Fair, Orientation, First-Year Preview Day, and various resource fairs. Not only are the SAMs gaining valuable professional experience, but they also contribute by serving on interview committees (internal and external to UAA), student panels (e.g. Transfer Advisor Workshop), campus workshops (e.g. Orientation), and student success survey outreach. They are valuable members and help to plan the events put on and are visible members of the UAA team during the occasions. The students are an integral part of the New Student Advising and Registration (NSAR) events that are hosted each year by UAA. They help to plan the events, present, and work directly with students during the day of the events. This planning begins during the winter quarter of each year and continues throughout the summer quarter. With the number of students that attend (501 in 2025), the advisors on staff would be unable to serve all of them without the triaging and learned knowledge for the support that the SAMs provide. It is an event that we truly could not hold without the support of our SAMs.

Additionally, the SAMs are our front desk office workers. They are the first people that students see when they come into the office. In this office, UAA shares a space with four other departments and the students handle the front office duties for all of them, in conjunction with their own student workers. They all work to understand the basic functions and reasons for which people may come in to visit any of them. In doing so, the SAMs have learned to make connections with these departments and that has translated across campus. They are able to easier understand how to work with others and to form relationships that have benefited both parties when it comes to creating student events or referring students to the proper locations.

STUDENT UTILIZATION (COMPARISON OVER PAST 2 YEARS)

The Student Advising Mentors (SAMs) in University Academic Advising (UAA) provide the full-range of drop-in hours for pre-major students, the group least likely to persist. As is common on most campuses, pre-major students have the lowest retention rate of any "major" on campus. Supporting pre-majors through Academic Advising is a key strategy to help them to persist through major declaration and beyond. With funding, we can maintain the high level of service that SAMs provide. Student staff work limited hours, so by having a complete team, they can provide a range of hours in aggregate to accommodate our students' diverse schedules. This is especially poignant during the registration periods on campus. Advisors often have a minimum of a two week wait. With the SAMs, students can help get their peers situated to easily get registered for classes and can assist in making sure they are ready to have their TACADV hold lifted in a timely manner during the fall and winter quarter registration periods. In addition, SAMs work with new students at New Student Advising and Registration, the summer preorientation event to get new students registered before classes fall. This event is crucial for converting confirmed students into registered students. At these events, SAMs served 501 students (402 in 2024) during this last academic year. SAMs were also a part of our Registration is a Piece of Cake event, where they help triage questions from students who are looking to register for later quarters.

In addition, we need our suite front desk staffed during open hours. With ever increasing wages and a requirement to cut department funding, we find ourselves lacking the ability to have it staffed. This front desk serves all of the students of the university, as not only do we work with undergraduate students, we frequently have visits from A) prospective students, B) students who are major-ready or already in their major, and C) those who are simply lost, as our office is in a visible, centrally-located area of campus. It is important to have someone staffed at the front desk to help with the walk-ins and assisting students who are not sure where to go. With this, our demographics are very similar to those on campus, being 61% students of color and 52% being a first-generation student.

We have a tracking table for our SAMs to input data on the number of students they are interacting with and how, including phone calls, walk-ins in-person and virtually in the department, and the department chat available on our department webpage. We use these numbers to understand where we can best assist students and the best way our SAMs can be utilized to meet students where they are at. There has been a 79% increase in these contact points over this last year.

COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK & IMPROVEMENTS

Right now our department utilizes Microsoft Outlook and Bookings to track which students benefit from our scheduled and drop-in services. We also have utilized a tracking table for our SAMs to input data on the number of students they are interacting with and from where, including phone calls, walk-ins in-person and virtually in the department and drop-ins across campus, and the department chat available on our department webpage. We use these numbers to understand where we can best assist students and the best way our SAMs can be utilized to meet students where they are at.

SERVICE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

The SAM program will continue to expand its high level of service to pre-major students. For example, in the past academic year, they served 501 students through New Student Advising and Registration events and 1833 individual interactions during just the Autumn 2025 quarter. There is a higher need for SAMs to be available on campus, in the office for students to drop in during advertised hours. SAMs have met students where they are through drop-in advising and campus events. With five departments in the suite they serve, having the front desk staffed is critical to the vitality of the suite and the students that come in.

This suite is applicable to students from before they start their college career until after. They work with UAA to be able to get registered for classes as they enter. During their time here, students will work with the Office of Undergraduate Education for their core classes and testing needs. They may work with the Office of Global Affairs if they are an international student or if they are interested in studying abroad. They may work with Legal Pathways to discover their best path to studying law. And as students approach the end of their college journey (and often along the way!), they will likely work with Career Development on figuring out their next moves and how to best enter into the work force. Having the suite open and staffed by our student workers is critical to ensuring that our visitors can connect with these departments and get the answers for which they are searching.

Staff Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Student Staff ³	\$12,000 + 3% increase	E001
		Student Staff Wages:
		Fringe @ 16.2%:
		PERSONNEL TOTAL:
		\$10,616
		\$1,720
		\$12,336

Other Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
		SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:
		\$0

PERSONNEL TOTAL:	\$12,336
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:	\$0
COMPLETE PROPOSAL TOTAL:	\$12,336

Supplemental Documents



FRONT DESK TRACKING

This tracks all interactions with those who work with our SAMs in the GWP 102 suite.