



### Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Associate Director :	<u>Jason Deutschman</u> Jason Deutschman	Date: <u>4/22/2025</u>
Associate Dean, College of Engineering :	<u>Antonella Sciortino</u> Antonella Sciortino	Date: <u>4/22/2025</u>
Dean, College of Engineering :	<u>Jinny Rhee</u> Jinny Rhee	Date: <u>4/23/2025</u>
Interim Vice Provost Academic Programs:	<u>Pei-Fang Hung</u> Pei-Fang Hung	Date: <u>4/24/2025</u>



**Program Review Summary**  
**Memorandum of Understanding**  
The College of Engineering Advising Center  
April 2025

This document serves as a summary of the Program Review findings and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the consensus reached by the College of Engineering (COE) Advising Center, the College of Engineering, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review with a Self-study received in June 2023. Assistant Director of Academic Advising Maria Organista (California State University, Fullerton) completed the external review on January 31, 2025. This report and MOU describe the goals to be achieved and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals during the next program review cycle.

The College of Engineering Advising Center was founded in 2010, and the Academic Advising team is composed of an Associate Director, and seven (7) Academic Advisors. In addition, the First Year Experience Coordinator also provides general advising services to incoming freshmen and first-year transfer students. Utilizing a caseload approach, students are assigned an academic advisor based on their major and current standing (i.e., pre-major or fully declared). Staff Advisors focus on providing academic counseling, major exploration, graduation planning, and support for various academic challenges. Specialized roles for staff advisors include a) Success Program Coordinator, b) Graduate Specialist Advisor, c) Outreach and Recruitment Specialist, and d) SOAR Coordinator. Department Faculty Advisors specific to a student's major assist all incoming transfer students, second bachelor's degree students, students seeking to add COE minors, and fully declared students. Additionally, valuing diversity, COE Advising Center is dedicated to fostering equitable services and advising practices.

This is the first program review for the COE Advising Center, therefore there is no previous MOU. The Center has established the following goals: 1) Provide accurate information about university requirements, policies, and procedures and 2) Encourage, support and guide students to take responsibility for meeting their own educational goals.

Resources reviewed for the report:

- Self-study 2023
- External Review Report 2025
- Engineering Student Success Center (ESSC) Academic Advising website

**Strengths were identified in the reports:**

1. **Student Contacts.** The COE Advising Center offers 30-minute appointments scheduled through Beach Connect, drop-in advising, and targeted campaigns. The availability and accessibility of advising, with both virtual and in-person sessions offered throughout the year and adjustments made during crucial times, have effectively supported students' advising needs. The total number of student contacts has increased steadily from 3,418 in 2016-17 to 5,764 in 2019-20. Similarly, contacts for first semester mandatory advising have risen from 530 in Fall 2012 to 763 in Fall 2022 and for SOAR they have risen from 1121 contacts in 2015-16 to 1462 in 2023-24. Note that an advisor to student ratio was not provided.
2. **Workshops and Class Visits.** The workshops offered by the COE Advising Center are designed for all first-time, first-year (FTFY), transfer, and continuing students. These workshops focus on academic policies, student and academic success within the major, GE planning, summer preparation, and connecting with various campus resources. Additionally, the COE Advising Center conducts class visits in major introductory courses such as ENGR 101 and ENGR 102.
3. **Support for FTFY students.** Strong support is provided for FTFY students through specially designed FTFY Mandatory Advising (FMA) workshops and the use of a major flowchart, which has been very effective during FMA sessions. Additionally, during the summer, 10-12 peer advisors, trained by a COE staff advisor, contribute to a holistic and well-rounded advising experience for students.
4. **Effective Communication** among COE Advising Center, Department Chairs, Faculty Advisors, and Associate Dean (AD). The use of assigned advisors in the COE Advising Center has strengthened communication between staff academic advisors and department faculty advisors. Monthly meetings between the AD and COE Advising Center have been valuable and are expected to resume in Spring 2025 after a short pause due to the preparations for the ABET accreditation visit in October 2024.
5. **Implementation of Online Request System.** The COE Advising Center processes approximately 500 submissions annually from students seeking to change their pre-major within or outside of COE. Moving the major change request process online has streamlined submission, making it easier to expedite and monitor in the advising office.

**Concerns were noted in the reports:**

No major concerns were noted in the self-study nor the external review report.

**Opportunities for Development were noted in the reports:**

1. **Enhancing Transfer Student Transition Support.** Equivalency and substitution request processes vary across COE departments, indicating a need for more tailored support for transfer students. Streamlining the course equivalency and substitution process is



essential to prevent an unnecessary increase in course permit requests. Suggestions from the external reviewer — such as a COE Transfer Bootcamp, conducting focus groups to assess student needs, more faculty involvement, and expanding peer advising services to transfer students — may provide valuable support in this area.

2. **Improving Online Resources to Streamline Advising.** Enhancing the COE website by including key resources would better support students in navigating their academic journeys, such as information on connecting with other advising centers across campus, COE faculty advisors, major flowcharts, links to university forms, and a comprehensive FAQ section. Additionally, developing standardized major flowcharts across departments would promote consistency and clarity and streamlining the advising process.
3. **Resources.** Resources and facilities have improved and expanded to better meet the demands of the growing college. This includes increased space and staff growth, improved technology and professional development, and more clarity and autonomy in the ESSC budget. However, the increased advising demand has led to increased need for space and advising staff. In addition, there is a need to reconfigure space to allow for more private conversations.
4. **Assessment.** The COE Advising Center currently relies upon 3 assessment surveys – the SOAR Advising Survey, Freshman Mandatory Advising survey, UCUA Advisor Training assessments. Assessment should also take place in the areas of the advising process (e.g., drop-in and individual appointment services) and student success outcome metrics from these meaningful and intentional interactions. The COE Advising Center has developed an assessment plan with a goal to implement the plan in the near future.
5. **Broaden the Communication Platforms.** Currently, the Advising Center primarily relies on direct communication methods (e.g., in-person and email) and does not utilize social media or similar platforms. The COE Advising Center has an opportunity to enhance its outreach by developing a strategic communications plan incorporating Beach Connect and other technologies.
6. **Ongoing Professional Development and Training.** Staff advisors demonstrated varying levels of awareness regarding the availability and use of professional development funding. Clearly outlining professional development opportunities tailored to different skillset training and advising needs would enhance their ability to advance their practices and better support students.

### Recommendations:

It is therefore agreed that the COE Advising Center will collaborate with the College of Engineering and Division of Academic Affairs to:

1. Implement the program's comprehensive assessment plan in order to complete annual assessments using direct and indirect methods and report on closing the loop activities



to illustrate that data are used to inform decision making. Provide an annual update (due June 1) on progress made towards MOU actions to the COE dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinators of Program Review and Assessment. Your review cycle will be from 2023-2030. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2030 for a 2030-2031 Academic Year review process. *(Opportunity #4)*

2. Offer targeted workshops and peer mentorship programs to support transfer students' transition and integration into the college community. *(Opportunity #1)*
3. Consider aligning the COE Advising Center's mission, vision, and goals with the university's overarching advising framework to promote consistency in advising practices. *(Opportunity #2)*
4. Develop a strategic communications plan and restructure the website of the COE Advising Center. *(Opportunity #2, 5)*
5. Assess and develop a strategic plan for physical and staff resources, implementing it as feasible within the College's financial capacity. *(Opportunity #3, 6)*

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