UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ADVISING COUNCIL

2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT

SUBMITTED BY

Stacey Sketo-Rosener, AVP for Undergraduate Advising
on behalf of the 2021-22 Undergraduate Academic Advising Council

UC SANTA CRUZ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Office of Campus Advising Coordination
Division of Undergraduate Education
University of California, Santa Cruz

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNCIL

UCSC's Undergraduate Academic Advising Council is charged by the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and Global Engagement as follows:

The Undergraduate Academic Advising Council improves academic advising at UC Santa Cruz to support a positive student experience, improved retention and graduation, and the elimination of achievement gaps. The Council shall report annually to the advising community and campus leaders. Overarching goals for the Council include:
- *Establishing and promoting a common definition, vision, and expectations of what academic advising is, and the roles advisors should play in supporting student achievement*
- *Addressing barriers to effective academic advising and student academic progress*
- *Coordinating among academic advising offices, systems, and student support services*
- *Advancing academic advising as a profession that directly contributes to the university's teaching and learning mission through a culture of continuous improvement and data-based decision-making.*

The Council's overarching goals are to provide vision, develop shared values and priorities, and support continuous improvement within academic advising, so that students are supported to succeed. Four subcommittees of the Council, composed of both Council members and others who provide relevant expertise, provide opportunities for more focused efforts.

The council met monthly over the course of the 2021-2022 academic year. This annual report includes an overview of progress, improvements, and challenges related to academic advising at UC Santa Cruz in 2021-22, and describes the Council's plans and recommendations for the 2022-23 academic year.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND SUBCOMMITTEES

The council includes broad representation across divisions as well as representatives at several levels of the institution. The 2021-2022 Advising Council included the following individuals:

- Richard Hughey, Vice Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Education and Global Engagement
- Dan Barnhart, Rachel Carson College Advisor; representing the Council of College Advisors and Preceptors
- Adrienne Bergenfeld, Assistant Director, International Student Services; representing Global Engagement
- Amy Bruinooge, Assistant Dean, Humanities; interim representative for Humanities advising
- Chris Burgess, Assistant Registrar, Enrollment and Records
- Kyle Eischen, Assistant Dean, Division of Social Sciences, representing the Assistant Deans
- Brenna Candelaria, Community Studies Program Manager/Undergraduate Major Advisor; representing the Coalition of Department Advisors
- Aaron Jones, EOP Director; representing the Division of Student Affairs and Success
- Carl Lamborg, Associate Professor of Ocean Sciences; representing the Committee on Educational Policy
- Rexton Lynn, Lead Advisor, Division of Physical and Biological Sciences
- Verónica López-Durán, Assistant Director for Programs Advising, Office of Campus Advising Coordination
- Danielle Mello, Associate Director of Advising, Office of Campus Advising Coordination
- Matt O'Hara, Stevenson College Provost, Professor and Chair of History; representing the Council of Provosts
- Andrea Peeters, Director of Undergraduate Advising, Baskin Engineering
- Moon Rinaldo, Lead Advisor, Arts Division
- Dmitrius Rodriguez, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Molly Segale, Lead Advisor, Social Sciences Division
- Sarah Shane-Vasquez, Lead Academic Preceptor, Kresge College; representing the Council of Academic Preceptors
- Stacey Sketo-Rosener, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Advising, Office of Campus Advising Coordination
- Phyllis Treige, Chief Experience Office, ITS
- Fiona Weigant, Education Department Manager; representing Department Managers
- Emily White, Executive Director, Career Success; representing the Division of Student Affairs and Success
- Jim Whitehead, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs, Baskin Engineering, and Professor of Computational Media

The 2021-22 Council included four subcommittees:
- Training and Development Subcommittee
- Operations, Procedures, and Technology Subcommittee
- Assessment Subcommittee
- Roles and Responsibilities Subcommittee

We appreciate the many staff and faculty who served on Advising Council subcommittees in 2021-22.

Academic Advising at UC Santa Cruz

UCSC's decentralized undergraduate academic advising system has two primary functional areas at its core: College Advising, which focuses on transition to the university and support for "academic career based" success requirements (including general education, choosing and preparing for a major, probationary supervision, and time-to-degree requirements), and Major/Minor Advising, which focuses on support for "academic program based" success requirements (including major qualification, major and minor requirements, connection to faculty, and engagement opportunities within the discipline). Our campus' 41 college and major/minor advising offices work collaboratively with many student support offices (such as Career Success, EOP, STARS, Global Learning, and International Student Services) and campus infrastructure (including Admissions, Office of the Registrar, and Financial Aid and Scholarships). Several years ago, the Office of Campus Advising Coordination was established within the Division of Undergraduate Education to provide leadership, coordination, and support.

Over the course of the 2021-22 academic year, 38,243 academic advising student appointments were scheduled and/or reported on through the Slug Success system, UCSC's campus-level system for appointment scheduling and advising notes. Most commonly reported "reasons" for advising appointments in the last year were "Academic planning/guidance" (12,657 appointments); "Enrollment" (5,189 appointments); "Forms/petitions/appeals" (4,555 appointments); "Graduation/progress check" (4,018 appointments); and "Academic difficulty" or "Academic standing" (3,401 appointments). It is encouraging to note that the most common reason for students to see an advisor in 2021-22 is so strongly linked to the [mission of academic advising](#). We note, however, that a significant number of advising appointments were focused on enrollment and checking requirements; we hope the number of appointments related to enrollment and checking requirements will decrease with the upcoming improvements to our degree audit system. The large number of appointments (which is surely underreported, given the varied levels of use across departments) indicates that students are finding their way to advisors, and are accessing academic advising on a regular basis.

We are fortunate to have a committed and collaborative community of professional academic advisors on our campus. The activities and achievements listed later in this report would not have been possible without the innovation and willingness of the advising community to collectively focus on student success. The input that advisors provide about the student experience and related policy and procedural issues is invaluable.
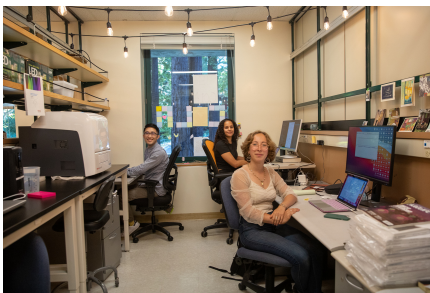
Activities and Achievements in 2021-22

The Council's focus in 2021-22 included several longer-term efforts to transform academic advising on our campus from a largely transactional activity focused on tasks such as checking requirements and enrollment support to a transformational activity aligned with the educational mission of UC Santa Cruz. Advising as a teaching and learning activity, instead of a prescriptive or transactional advising approach, can best support our undergraduates as well as the campus's goals of increased retention and graduation. Students' experiences and needs have changed over the course of the pandemic, and our advising approaches must respond to those changes.

The Council heard several presentations from campus partners as well as internal discussions this year, including:
- A presentation on campus-level technologies including AIS degree audit and EAB's Slug Success
- A presentation on some of the efforts to assess advising effectiveness that are taking place at the campus level and in individual units at UC Santa Cruz
- A discussion of student to advisor ratios and advisor roles and responsibilities
- A presentation about supporting transfer students and a transfer receptive campus climate
- Major declaration at UC Santa Cruz, and discussion of a possible framework for supporting first and second year students in major exploration and timely declaration.

Mission and Goals

A major achievement in 2021-22 was the revision, after extensive consultation with advisors and advising-adjacent campus partners, of our campus mission and goals for undergraduate academic advising. The mission and goals had not been revisited in 10 or more years, and because they are the foundation for all of the Council's efforts toward improved training and development for advisors, more clearly defined roles and responsibilities for different staff within academic advising, and assessment of our effectiveness, the Council chose to pursue this revision to ensure downstream efforts are effective. At its June 2022 meeting, the Council voted to adopt these new mission and goals for academic advising, which reflect an increased focus on partnerships with students, which is at the heart of the advising work we do. We are very appreciative of the many advisors who provided feedback on the new mission - their engagement in the revision process showed a high level of commitment to the success of our students as well as to the advising community. The next steps in this process will be to revise the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for advising, which must follow from the mission and goals. This will be a key goal for the Council in the coming year.

Organizational Structure and Leadership

A central recommendation of the 2018 Advising Task Force report, later supported by an external NACADA review, was the development of "lead advisor" positions in each of the five academic disciplinary divisions. Partial funding was provided in 2019 for these positions, designed to improve coordination and training for advisors in order to improve consistency in the advising experience for students. The 2021-22 academic year saw the full implementation of this model, with the final "lead advisor" position hired in the Humanities Division - we are happy to welcome Shauntay Larkins in her new role as Director of Student Achievement in Humanities. Along with the central position (Assistant Director for Programs Advising within the Office of Campus Advising Coordination) related to these divisionally located positions, this model will provide an improved structure to support training as well as communication between major advising, college advising, advising-adjacent support offices, and divisional and campus leadership.

The colleges made further progress toward full adoption of the shared preceptor model with a transition to the model for Porter and Kresge Colleges, with Sarah Shane-Vasquez now serving as the first two-college preceptor for these colleges.

This brings 80% of college advising offices to this organizational model. The goal of this model is to increase consistency in the student experience by decreasing the number of supervisors and increasing the number of staff who are primarily focused on advising, and by creating a smaller and more nimble leadership team in colleges advising.

Within the Office of Campus Advising Coordination, a new team is being built to support a proactive and data-driven approach to student academic advising initiatives. The new Strategic Advising Initiatives Team will be led by Winnie Tang, who was recently hired as Assistant Director for Strategic Advising Initiatives and Assessment. As we head into the fall quarter, she will be building her team and developing outreach and other strategies to support student success and timely graduation through academic advising.

Assessment

Several efforts to assess the effectiveness of academic advising took place in the past year.

The assessment subcommittee of the Council, led by Assistant Director for Programs Advising Verónica López-Durán, assessed the effectiveness in meeting one of our current student learning outcomes: Students will be formally declared in a major by the deadline in the last quarter of their second year. The subcommittee reviewed information to learn how the coordinated efforts of the advising community supported students in timely major declaration. They found advisors' coordinated work over the last three years resulted in a steady decline in enrollment holds based on undeclared majors (note that although spring 2022 numbers look larger than spring 2021, this is due to fluctuations in the size of the frosh and sophomore classes as many students took leaves of absence during the pandemic).

In fall 2021, the colleges implemented a "chaser survey" that goes out to every student who meets with a college advisor; the colleges had long intended to implement a consistent evaluation mechanism, and the need to understand students' preferred advising modality (in-person, Zoom, phone, etc.) and accessibility of advising served as a catalyst for implementation. The survey includes questions both about modality and accessibility, as well as about student expectations of advising and the attainment of advising learning outcomes. After its initial adoption, the survey was revised slightly based on feedback from members of the Student Union Assembly. Results of this year's survey indicate that the majority of students surveyed in 2021-22 preferred Zoom advising, with in-person advising coming in second. The vast majority indicated that they were able to schedule an advising appointment in their preferred modality (virtual vs. in-person) within 3-5 days. The colleges will continue to survey students, recognizing that the changing nature of the pandemic will likely change students' modality preferences and we'll need to respond as times change.

The chaser survey results also indicate that the vast majority of students agreed with the statements, "My college advisor helped me understand my options and next steps, if any," "My college advisor was knowledgeable and made referrals to appropriate offices," and "My college advisor was approachable, caring, and listened to me." These survey results are in contrast to less positive responses gathered from the UCUES survey in 2020. The Council also reviewed the UCUES results, and representatives on the Council shared these results and discussed them with their teams. Our colleagues in IRAPS consulted with several members of the Advising Council to revise some of the questions related to advising on the 2022 UCUES survey to make them more actionable, but the primary focus of the systemwide survey remains on student satisfaction, which is widely recognized as a common but ineffective (when used alone) method of assessing the effectiveness of advisors' work. Troxel, DiGregorio, Harris, Guertin, and Spight (2019), in their report, Achieving Excellence and Assessing Impact of Academic Advising: A Landscape Analysis of Existing National Surveys,* found that most larger surveys (similar to our UCUES) do not ask adequate questions about advising outcomes and

* Troxel, W.T., DiGregorio, G; Guertin, G.; Harris, V.; and Spight, D.B., (2018). Achieving Excellence and Assessing Impact of Academic Advising: A Landscape Analysis of Existing National Surveys. 2018 Reinvention Collaborative National Conference, Arlington, VA.

effectiveness, but instead focus on student satisfaction and transactional processes.

Because our campus has not developed extensive expertise in the assessment of academic advising, we invited a NACADA consultant and faculty member at the NACADA Assessment Institute to provide training for lead preceptors, divisional lead advisors, and key staff from the Office of Campus Advising, among others, this summer. The training was designed in part to build a culture of assessment within the advising community, and to support the efforts of the Council's assessment subcommittee along with the new Assistant Director for Strategic Advising Initiatives and Assessment, who will be chairing the subcommittee next year.

Process and Technology Improvements

Last year's Council, encouraged by the Operations, Procedures, and Technology Subcommittee, recommended, "that the campus ensure adequate support for the development, maintenance, and training associated with central technology resources, including degree audit, transfer credit articulation and posting, student communication functionality, and academic planning." The campus has taken steps in this direction by establishing a three person degree audit team who will "assess the landscape and needs for transformative change, in policy, process, and technology, in support of students, advisors, curriculum managers, and many others."* The Advising Council is pleased with the commitment to this important initiative, recognizing that providing every student with a **functioning** degree audit report that they can access 24/7, will allow academic advisors to focus on guiding students in the development and achievement of their goals, instead of on checking requirements. The Council looks forward to seeing the work of this important new team.

The 2021-22 academic year saw the first use of AIS GT Eforms in an advising process. In spring of 2022, early adopting major advising offices and all college advising offices began processing major declarations and the related processes for removing undeclared enrollment holds in MyUCSC. The process was a challenge due to our decentralized advising structure, but a highly consultative process by staff in the Office of Campus Advising Coordination and ITS led to a decreased workload in processing major declaration petitions, and a consistent starting place for all students to declare their major. In spring 2022, 1300+ students submitted a declaration form in MyUCSC, and this number will grow in the coming year as remaining major advising offices adopt the new process in the fall. Besides simplifying the process for students and advisors, this will allow us for the first time to understand how many students on our campus are approved to pursue their major of choice. We should also be able to report on conditions or requirements/ deadlines that aren't met, to better understand the student experience. Once reportable, we hope to use this data to better understand the connection between major preparation, major declaration, and persistence and graduation, and determine ways in which academic advisors can better support students in choosing and qualifying for a major.

Enrollment for our transfer students in their first quarter has been a labor-intensive and difficult process for many years, due to their often needing to enroll for classes that require prerequisites that our enrollment system doesn't recognize (since they were taken at other schools). After recognizing this problem for many years and the duplicative process required for academic advisors to enter prerequisites for fall courses which are then entered again when Admissions posts credit, the advising community embarked on two different pilot processes this summer to improve transfer student enrollment. The Office of Campus Advising Coordination, aided by staff in the Admissions and Registrar's Offices, has centrally posted screening courses to incoming transfer student records for all academic disciplinary divisions outside of Baskin Engineering. For the fall 2022 transfer class, 2395 courses were posted for 641 transfer students in screening majors. Baskin Engineering advising, in a related pilot, has implemented a form of "self-placement" that focuses not just on the courses students took elsewhere, but their level of academic preparation as reported in a survey. In an extraordinarily effective outreach strategy, their survey was completed by every incoming transfer student in preparation for individual advising meetings. A related effort, in the Admissions Office, will improve

*From the July 2022 Hughey Highlights: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1SK0k5sABXRmnHxM8IuTRkSzPs3Cnz4zd8

 transfer credit rule-building in AIS to ease both prerequisite problems as well as the incorporation of transfer credit into the Academic Advisement Report (AAR) which serves a central role in the degree audit efforts.

Student Success and Communications

Several efforts within advising, or including advising, were made to support student success in the 2021-22 year.

Advising was represented on the Enrollment Holds Working Group, which focused on ways to minimize barriers to students' enrollment in the upcoming quarter by reducing the number of enrollment holds placed by campus offices. Prompted by requests from the Student Union Assembly and convened by VPDUEGE Hughey, the group's work resulted in significant reductions in enrollment holds, especially those based on outstanding debts and undeclared majors. The group also developed a central page on the advising website that students can use to identify how to remove an enrollment hold, developed quarterly communications to be sent through the Registrar's Office, and developed a set of standards to be used by hold-placing offices. Enrollment holds placed by other offices are not the responsibility of academic advisors, but because they often result in barriers to academic progress, each unresolved hold has potential to become an academic advising issue.

The Roles and Responsibilities subcommittee of the Advising Council, in an effort to align our efforts to have the greatest impact on student success, began "mapping" the first year student academic advising experience to college and major advising offices. This work was prompted in part by survey results from advisors who were asked which student learning outcomes they were responsible for delivering; the results indicated a lack of clarity as well as several student learning outcomes for advising that may not be consistently addressed through academic advising. In the coming year, the subcommittee hopes to align their mapping with the Student Learning Outcomes for Advising, which will be revised by the Council in the coming year.

The Colleges, in part prompted by a new administrative deadline for barment-like actions established by the VPDUEGE within the Division of Undergraduate Education, developed new procedures, consistent across all colleges, for the review of students who fall subject to disqualification based on their grades. This new process is expected to shift efforts away from the academic review process and toward supporting students with GPA deficits.

Advisor Training and Development

The Council's Training and Development subcommittee worked throughout the 2021-22 academic year to build central, consistent business process documents that will ultimately be incorporated into a manual for new college and major advisors. Of the 47 business process guides that they have determined will be needed, approximately 60% are complete or in progress. In 2022-23, they will work to complete the development of these resources as well as identify how the documents will be presented and maintained within a structure that will be easy for advisors to use. This is the first campus-level procedure manual that developed for advisors, and will improve consistency in the student experience.

Several development opportunities were made available to academic advisors across campus this year, including the annual Advising Forum, All-Hands Informational Meeting, and Pre-Virtual-Advising-Days Info Session sponsored by the Office of Campus Advising Coordination. Quarterly CODA/CCAP meetings this year included presentations and discussions about "Learning and Student-Centered Advising," "Working with Major Changers," and a report from the American College Health Association and its implications for advising. The fifth cohort of undergraduate academic advisors completed UCSC's advising certificate program, "Advising the Students of Today." The Multicultural Advising Conference training, developed as part of the HSI MAPA grant, has been incorporated into the UC Learning Center and is available to all academic advisors, and will be incorporated into the certificate program in 2022-23.

New and Continuing Challenges

New and continuing challenges within, or related to, academic advising are many, but we focus here on those that have the greatest impact on our ability to move to a transformational advising experience for students, and away from an advising experience that is primarily defined by transactions such as enrollment, checking requirements, or reviewing forms. Some of these challenges have solutions underway, and we appreciate the attention of campus leadership to these issues.

Lack of a central and authoritative information hub for students

Last year's Advising Council report included a recommendation that, "the Registrar's Office and Office of Campus Advising Coordination continue work in consolidating publications to provide a one-stop resource for information about academic programs and planning for students, and that their work be supported in whatever way is possible." Consolidation of student-facing publications including the Navigator, the Schedule of Classes, the General Catalog, and the Registrar's and Advising websites is an enormous undertaking that requires dedicated staffing. Earlier this year, the campus committed funding to hire a writer who will be working with us to review and revise the publications listed above into a central "Academic Guide." We appreciate the funding commitment to this effort and anticipate completion of this project in the 2022-23 academic year.

A related challenge is that, because of our distributed approach to website publication at UC Santa Cruz, similar but often conflicting information may be published on different websites. As we further develop central resources, it will be important for all offices that publish information about academic programs, requirements, policies, and procedures to link to sources of authoritative information instead of re-stating information on their own sites. The advising community took the first step in this direction in the publication of our annual "Getting Started in the Major" guides, by linking into General Catalog statements wherever possible instead of re-stating information.

Technology

Last year's Advising Council report included a recommendation that, "the campus ensure adequate support for the development, maintenance, and training associated with central technology resources, including degree audit, transfer credit articulation and posting, student communication functionality, and academic planning." We are happy to see a commitment to improvement in our degree audit and transfer credit articulation and posting, which are foundational to any academic planning software that would better serve students. We hope that the new degree audit team will help the campus build momentum in this area.

Advisor Turnover and Student to Advisor Ratios

Student to advisor ratios in most advising offices on campus remain suboptimal, and combined with a recent uptick in turnover in advising positions and the number of job responsibilities that many advisors have in addition to advising, this results in students not receiving the level of academic advising support they need. We appreciate that campus leadership has invested in professional staff salaries through the three year equity compensation program. Increased salaries are an important part of advisor retention, and a student's ability to maintain a longitudinal relationship with an advisor relies on our being able to retain staff. To significantly improve advisor retention, it will be important to continue focusing on increasing salaries, but also to ensure that advisor workloads are manageable. Additionally, it will be important to evaluate the advising experience to ensure that staff who approach the advising profession with high ideals of supporting

students to reach their goals are able to find satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment in the work that they do. The improvement of advisor retention and student to advisor ratios will only be possible through continued investment in more advising staff and technology improvements.

The pandemic has taken an extreme toll on our students, and their need for support is higher than it has ever been. As the campus focuses on improvement in our graduation rates and on the realization of our 2030 goals, it will be important to continue to invest in our academic advising workforce.

Distributed Instead of Strategic Approach to Advisor Training

Advisor training continues to be a challenge for our campus. Having academic advisors working in 41 different offices on campus, with many of those advisors working in single-advisor offices, results in a highly distributed training environment instead of a more strategic approach. Several efforts, outlined earlier in this report, are laying the groundwork for a more consistent onboarding and training process, including the work of the Training and Development subcommittee of the Council and the recent creation of divisional lead advisors in each of the academic disciplinary divisions.

Next Year's Council Goals and Areas of Focus

The Council will be focusing on the following goals in the 2022-2023 academic year:

A. Following up on the successful revision of the mission and goals for academic advising at UC Santa Cruz, the Council will review and revise the academic advising student learning outcomes (incorporating campus-wide academic milestones), which will form the basis for assessing our effectiveness on an ongoing basis.

B. The Council will focus on the coordination of academic advising in the first (frosh) year. With new advising programs focusing on the first year in both the Physical and Biological Sciences and in Baskin Engineering, it will be important for the colleges and major advising offices to build a strong collaborative approach to ensure that students have a consistent and seamless experience with academic advising.

C. The Council will continue the work it began on clarifying roles and responsibilities within the academic advising community. This will include defining the work of advisors in relation to the advising mission, and to other work like enrollment, scheduling, data entry, etc. A strong focus for this goal will be on clarifying "who does what" among college and major advising, Campus Advising Coordination, and academic-advising adjacent offices like EOP, STARS, and ISSS.

D. The Council will complete the remaining business process documents for inclusion in a campus-wide training manual for academic advisors.

E. The Council will focus on building a culture of assessment and continuous improvement within the academic advising community by providing assessment training and defining a common framework for how we measure our effectiveness.

F. The Council will discuss and problem-solve around the retention of academic advisors (salary, staffing, etc.), to ensure our students are able to build a longitudinal relationship with an advisor as they progress to graduation.

Council Recommendations

The following are outside the purview of the Council, but have a strong effect on students' experience with academic advising. The Advising Council strongly recommends the following to campus leadership to improve the student experience and ensure students benefit from academic advising:

A. Ensure continued and adequate support for the development of central information resources. The approval of funding to contract with writers to consolidate central publications was a great first step, and the Council looks forward to seeing what comes out of this area of focus in the coming year. By making online information clear and transparent to students, we can free up academic advisors' time from strictly providing information to instead providing guidance consistent with the mission of academic advising.

B. Continue to make technological improvements in undergraduate advising a priority by continuing the work that has been started to improve our degree audit, to improve articulation and posting of transfer credit, and to move more advising processes to GT Eforms. In pursuing these improvements, we want to again emphasize the importance of one of our recommendations from last year, "that campus-wide technology that affects the student experience (such as MyUCSC, EAB Navigate/ Slug Success, and any degree audit or academic planning platforms that may be acquired) be developed and implemented in a coordinated way with each other, instead of as entirely separate initiatives. An uncoordinated approach to the systems that students use to evaluate their progress to degree will not serve students well."

The UCSC Undergraduate Academic Advising Council appreciates the increased attention to advising and student success by campus leadership, and applauds the many creative and committed professional advisors on our campus. We welcome thoughts and suggestions from campus partners, which may be shared by contacting Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Advising Stacey Sketo-Rosener at ssketo@ucsc.edu or 831-459-2206.

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