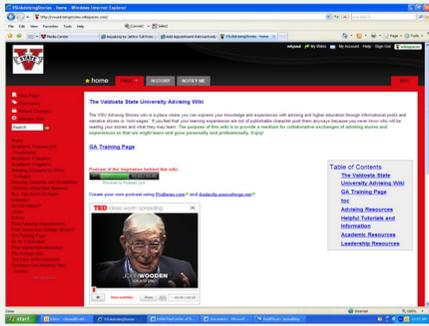


# Enhancing Advisor Development through the Wide World of Wiki

Kohle Paul, Michael Kitchens, Brittany Baldwin, & Brendan Dochney

Valdosta State University

<p><b>Background Information</b></p> <p>The Student Success Center (SSC) and the Office of Academic Student Instructional Support (OASIS) at Valdosta State University recently merged into one department.</p> <p>One of the major functions of both departments is academic advising.</p> <p>The SSC/OASIS employs 27 graduate assistant advisors (GA Advisors). The 27 GA Advisors are dispersed throughout 13 different departments across campus.</p> <p>OASIS is located in the University Center room 1114.</p> <p>SSC is located in the Langdale Hall Mezzanine on Main Campus.</p>	<p><b>How We Implemented the Advising Wiki</b></p> <p>The Valdosta State University advising wiki is used as a digital advising manual where advisors can post and edit departmental/university policies and procedures that they encounter on a daily basis as well as post advising related issues they wish to discuss with other advisors.</p> <p>Graduate Assistants, Faculty, and Staff within OASIS/SSC were encouraged to share personal experiences and found information.</p> <p>The wiki postings on changes to departmental/university policies and procedures and advising related issues are then able to influence monthly advising focus groups, webinars, and professional development opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Improvements</b></p> <p>Each advisor schedules a 15-30 minute block each week to review the advising wiki.</p> <p>The advising wiki is linked to the SSC/OASIS appointment scheduler page, making it more visible and easier to access.</p> <p>The appointment scheduler is the software that was created specifically for advisors to use to log their daily advising appointments.</p> <p>Weekly emails reminding each advisor to check the wiki and reminders during monthly focus groups have also been helpful.</p>
<p><b>Statement of the Problem</b></p> <p>Although the two offices merged, physically they remained separate. The different locations made it difficult for GA Advisor communication and collaboration.</p> <p>To help bridge the communication and collaboration gap, the SSC/OASIS decided to investigate different mediums for enhancing GA Advisor communication and collaboration. The SSC/OASIS agreed that the use of an advising wiki could help alleviate the communication and collaboration gap among the departments 27 GA Advisors.</p>	<p><b>Advisor Feedback</b></p> <p>The SSC/OASIS conducted one-on-one GA Advisor interviews and focus groups to elucidate their perceptions and use of the advising wiki.</p> <p><b>Preliminary results:</b></p> <p>100% of the GA Advisors were reading the advising wiki on a weekly basis. They also agreed that the advising wiki was helpful in increasing advisor communication and collaboration across campus</p> <p>52% of the GA Advisors were posting and editing wiki content on a weekly basis. They identified their advising load and lack of time during the work day as their main reasons for not committing to the intent of the advising wiki.</p>	<p><b>Future Uses</b></p> <p>The SSC/OASIS intends to continue using the advising wiki as a collaborative, informational manual for training discussions and workshops each month. The wiki, in conjunction with monthly advisor development workshops, will allow the SSC/OASIS to enhance each of the three areas of advisor training and development-- conceptual, informational, and relational-- established by former NACADA president Nancy King (King, 2000).</p> <p>The Valdosta State University advising wiki can be found at the following URL: <a href="http://vsuadvisingstories.wikispaces.com/">http://vsuadvisingstories.wikispaces.com/</a>.</p>
<p><b>Pros &amp; Cons of Using a Wiki</b></p> <p><b>Benefits Include:</b></p> <p>Most offer a free version as well as a “sandbox” or test wiki for users to practice.</p> <p>All users are required to register for an account before they can add and edit content.</p> <p>Information stored on a wiki is stored according to topic rather than chronology.</p> <p>Wikis can help enhance organizational communication as well as group and interdisciplinary collaboration (Clark &amp; Mason, 2008; Glogowski &amp; Steiner, 2008; Raman, 2006).</p> <p><b>Drawbacks Include:</b></p> <p>Training on how to use a wiki is necessary before it can be utilized.</p> <p>The amount of free time users have can impede the training demands of using a wiki as well as the usage of its peer editing function.</p> <p>Wikis lack “real-time” collaboration. Two users cannot post and edit on the same wiki page at the same time (Clark &amp; Mason, 2008; Glogowski &amp; Steiner, 2008; Raman, 2006).</p>	<p><b>VSU Advising Wiki</b></p>  <p>Wikis can be used as informational mediums for advisor training and development. They can act as a discussion board where advisors can discuss topics related to training and development, institutional and departmental policies and procedures, and any pertinent educational topics. They provide a location to store and maintain institutional and departmental policies and procedures (Clark &amp; Mason, 2008; Glogowski &amp; Steiner, 2008; Raman, 2006).</p>	<p><b>References</b></p> <p>Clark, C. J., &amp; Mason, E. B. (2008). A wiki way of working. <i>Internet References Learning Services Quarterly</i>, 13(1), 113-132. doi: 10.1300/J136v13n01_07</p> <p>Glogowski, J., &amp; Steiner, S. (2008). The life of a wiki: How Georgia state university library's wiki enhances content currency and employee collaboration. <i>Internet Learning Services Quarterly</i>, 13(1), 87-98. doi: 10.1300/J136v13n01_05</p> <p>King, M. (2000). Designing effective training for academic advisors. In Gordon, V.N. &amp; Habley, W.R., &amp; Associates (Eds.), <i>Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook</i> (p.289-97). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</p> <p>Raman, M. (2006). Wiki technology as a “free” collaborative tool within an organizational setting. <i>Information Systems Management</i>, 23(4), 59-66. doi:10.1201/1078.10580530/46352.23.4.20060901/95114.8</p> <p>Richardson, W. (2006). <i>Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms</i>. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.</p> <p>Solomon, G., &amp; Schrum, L. (2007). <i>Web 2.0 new tools, new schools</i>. Eugene: International Society for Technology in Education.</p> <p>West, J. A., &amp; West, M. L. (2009). <i>Using wikis for online collaboration the power of the read-write web</i>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</p>

# Background Information

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OASIS is located in the University Center room 1114.

SSC is located in the Langdale Hall Mezzanine on Main Campus.

# Statement of the Problem

Although the two offices merged, physically they remained separate. The different locations made it difficult for GA Advisor communication and collaboration.

To help bridge the communication and collaboration gap, the SSC/OASIS decided to investigate different mediums for enhancing GA Advisor communication and collaboration. The SSC/OASIS agreed that the use of an advising wiki could help alleviate the communication and collaboration gap among the departments 27 GA Advisors.

# Pros & Cons of Using a Wiki

## **Benefits Include:**

- Most offer a free version as well as a “sandbox” or test wiki for users to practice.
- All users are required to register for an account before they can add and edit content.
- Information stored on a wiki is stored according to topic rather than chronology.
- Wikis can help enhance organizational communication as well as group and interdisciplinary collaboration (Clark & Mason, 2008; Glogowski & Steiner, 2008; Raman, 2006).

## **Drawbacks Include:**

- Training on how to use a wiki is necessary before it can be utilized.
- The amount of free time users have can impede the training demands of using a wiki as well as the usage of its peer editing function.
- Wikis lack “real-time” collaboration. Two users cannot post and edit on the same wiki page at the same time (Clark & Mason, 2008; Glogowski & Steiner, 2008; Raman, 2006).

# How We Implemented the Advising Wiki

The Valdosta State University advising wiki is used as a digital advising manual where advisors can post and edit departmental/university policies and procedures that they encounter on a daily basis as well as post advising related issues they wish to discuss with other advisors.

Graduate Assistants, Faculty, and Staff within OASIS/SSC were encouraged to share personal experiences and found information.

The wiki postings on changes to departmental/university policies and procedures and advising related issues are then able to influence monthly advising focus groups, webinars, and professional development opportunities.

# Advisor Feedback

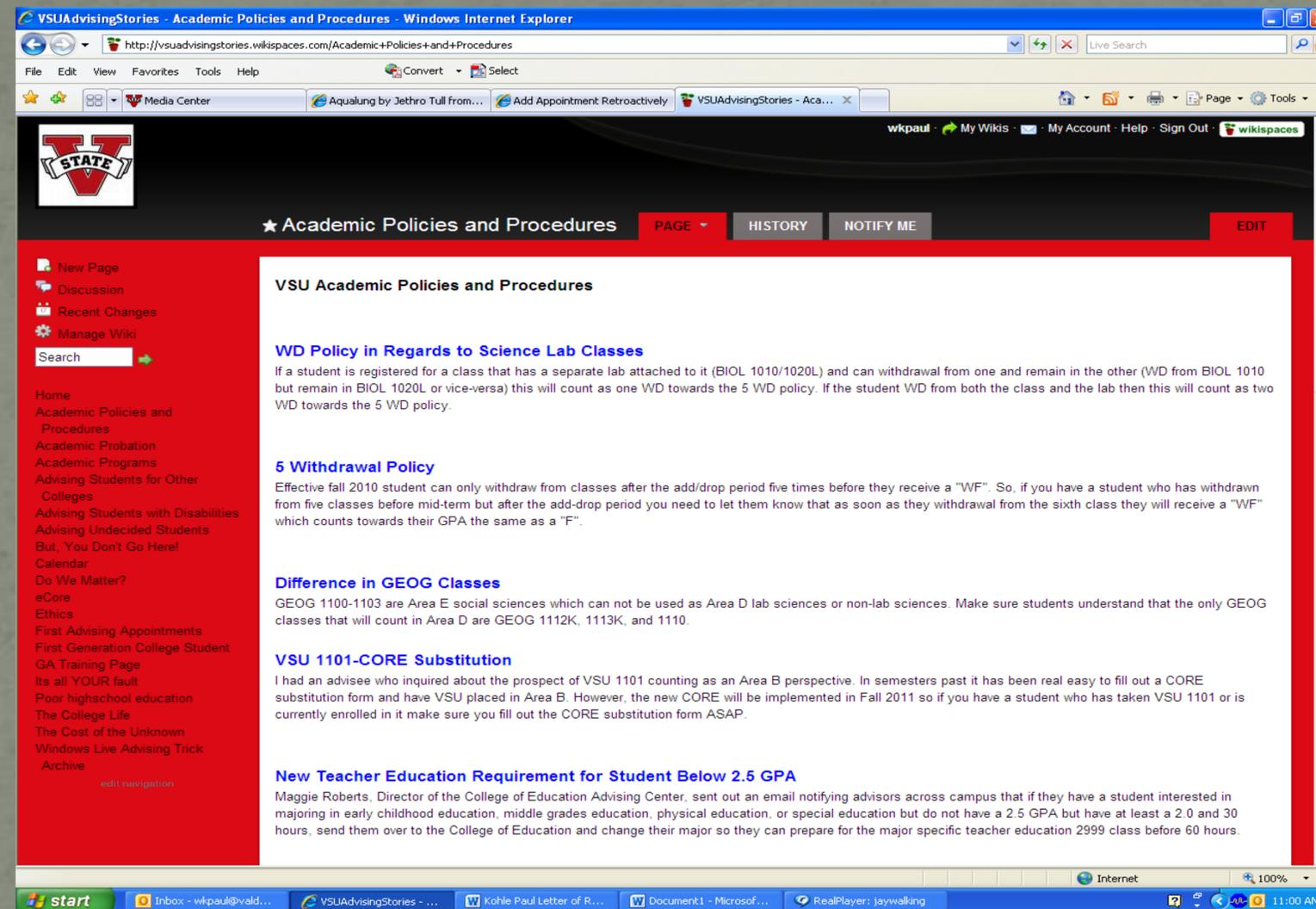
The SSC/OASIS conducted one-on-one GA Advisor interviews and focus groups to elucidate their perceptions and use of the advising wiki.

## **Preliminary results:**

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52% of the GA Advisors were posting and editing wiki content on a weekly basis. They identified their advising load and lack of time during the work day as their main reasons for not committing to the intent of the advising wiki.

# VSU Advising Wiki



- Wikis can be used as informational mediums for advisor training and development. They can act as a discussion board where advisors can discuss topics related to training and development, institutional and departmental policies and procedures, and any pertinent educational topics. They provide a location to store and maintain institutional and departmental policies and procedures (Clark & Mason, 2008; Glogowski & Steiner, 2008; Raman, 2006).

# Improvements

Each advisor schedules a 15-30 minute block each week to review the advising wiki.

The advising wiki is linked to the SSC/OASIS appointment scheduler page, making it more visible and easier to access.

The appointment scheduler is the software that was created specifically for advisors to use to log their daily advising appointments.

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# Future Uses

The SSC/OASIS intends to continue using the advising wiki as a collaborative, informational manual for training discussions and workshops each month. The wiki, in conjunction with monthly advisor development workshops, will allow the SSC/OASIS to enhance each of the three areas of advisor training and development-- conceptual, informational, and relational-- established by former NACADA president Nancy King (King, 2000).

The Valdosta State University advising wiki can be found at the following URL:

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# References

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