NYU’s academic programs have expanded their cross-school options and can now offer students a rich array of academic opportunities. As a consequence, it has become more difficult for advisers in any one department or school to be informed and up to date on all the opportunities students have for cross-school minors and learning. In the spring of 2009, the UAAC formed a subcommittee to explore the status of currently available all-University advising resources and develop options to improve what exists and augment specialized advising in departments and schools.

To determine the feasibility and benefits of an all-University advising resource, the subcommittee reviewed the advising structures for 24 universities across the nation, took a more in-depth look at three universities similar to NYU in their structures (Boston University, University of Southern California, and Northwestern University), reviewed the websites and FAQs currently available for NYU schools/departments related to advising issues, and discussed the experience within NYU of the Academic Resource Center (ARC), which temporarily provided centralized advising to students during the graduate student strike in 2005. The subcommittee’s findings were as follows:

- A centralized advising center can be successful in providing a single point of information concerning major and minor requirements across schools and in helping students find the appropriate individual advising source in each school or major. The successful advising centers consisted of well-trained advisers whose in-office hours were supplemented by easy-to-access FAQs and email contact during extended hours.
- NYU has many sources of information through school and program websites and their FAQs, but they vary in accessibility and the quality of up-to-date information related to their own or cross-school programs.
- The experience at NYU with the ARC was well received by students because it offered a physical space on campus where students could get general information and guidance for academic issues.

Based on a discussion of these findings in the full UAAC, the UAAC is recommending the following:

1. **That NYU establish an all-University advising center space in a centralized location that has flexible/expanded hours to be staffed initially by a minimum of two to three advisers from the College of Arts and Science.** The Dean of CAS has volunteered to staff the center and cover the expense. The center should be co-located with other student services such as the College Learning Center and
the Opportunity programs (HEOP and C-STEP) so that students could receive multiple services through one portal. The advising staff would be trained to provide general answers on cross-school minors and majors but would not be expected to know all the details of the requirements of each academic program. Their main role would be to ensure that students are directed to the right resource to support cross-school registration and/or information gathering.

2. **That NYU establish a virtual all-University advising resource which supplements the all-University advising center and where students can find helpful FAQs and expanded hours of email contact for cross-school advising information.** This recommendation has two components. The first is the requirement that an adviser, who may be located in the all-University advising center described above, be assigned to monitor the virtual resource. The adviser would not only respond to emails from students but also track the questions to add to the FAQ site. The second component is for the University to ensure that the NYU search engine operates so that students and advisers can easily find information about available academic programs when they need it.

3. **That the NYU Registrar send a monthly communication to designated advising Deans or Directors, informing them of changes in the requirements for major or minors across all schools and departments.** This would address the need for advising faculty/staff to have current information on major and minor requirements and allow schools and programs to update their advising FAQs on a timely basis. Since the Registrar is the central repository for academic requirements in all NYU schools, the committee felt that the Registrar is the most timely and accurate source of information on curricular requirements. Each school would be responsible for keeping its advising faculty/staff informed about changes so that they could advise students referred to them from the all-University advising center. In addition, the committee suggests that there be an annual adviser development program for all advisers currently in the University and that it be mandated for all new hires. This would provide training to standardize the quality of advising services, provide information about cross-school initiatives, and enhance communication across schools and programs.