

Bernstein Center for Advising opens at Alfred University

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ALFRED, NY – Alfred University's Pamela Lavin Bernstein Center for Advising officially opened its doors during a grand opening Thursday afternoon. The Center, made possible by a gift from alumna Pamela Lavin Bernstein '71, will strengthen student retention by combining the efforts of faculty and professional academic advisors.

The Center for Advising is located on the third floor of Powell Campus Center, in renovated space that houses four offices, a computer lab, and reception area. It is staffed by Executive Director Nadine Shardlow, who also serves as director of the University's HEOP/EOP opportunity programs, and a team of three professional academic advisors: Kassie McCarn, Shelby O'Rourke and Mariah Evans.

"It's wonderful to have this resource. We at Alfred owe it to our students," said Bernstein, who was on hand for the opening. "It truly enhances their experience."

"We could not be more grateful for the leadership investment that Pam Bernstein has made in enhancing the success of our students," said Alfred University president Mark Zupan. "Enhancing professional advising for our students has been a long-standing aspiration of our University. Pam has now generously given us the means to make those dreams a reality."

The academic success coaching program has been operating since the beginning of the 2018-19 semester; it was housed temporarily in Scholes Library before moving into the new space in Powell Campus Center. Academic advisors are serving as coaches to a portion of the University's first-year students, helping them to stay on track to complete their degrees on time.

"The academic coaching model is not unique to Alfred, but it's particularly well suited to us, so the Strategic Retention Council made this recommendation two years ago to increase student success and graduation rates," said Kathy Woughter, vice president of Student Affairs.

When working with students, the academic advisors will coordinate with the Career Development Center, Financial

Aid Office, and the Center for Academic Success, as well as the faculty advisors, to help students identify the appropriate path to a degree, and ultimately to a career. Woughter explained that the program is running as a pilot this year, with approximately half of first-year students participating. Ultimately, it will be offered to all first-year students, with plans to offer student-to-student peer advising.

“We expect the Center to serve as a great training opportunity for graduate students who want a career in student affairs/advising,” Woughter said. Alfred University offers a master’s degree program in College Student Development, which helps prepare future student affairs professionals.

Woughter thanked Bernstein, a longtime supporter of initiatives aimed at helping Alfred University students achieve success, for making the Center for Advising a reality.

“We are thrilled that Pam Bernstein shared our vision and made both the physical space and the staffing possible for us as part of a broader set of strategies to enhance success,” Woughter commented. “Even though her background is not in higher education, Pam is more of an expert in student success strategies than most professionals in the field at this point! I couldn’t be happier to work with a great partner like Pam.”

Through her previous gifts to Alfred University, Bernstein has created scholarships, provided travel grants and leadership gifts that help students benefit from applied and experiential learning opportunities. As a charter member of what is now the Judson Leadership Center’s Advisory Board, Bernstein has been tireless in her efforts on behalf of the leadership program. She also created the Pamela Lavin Bernstein Women of Influence Speaker Series that allows the University to bring in high-profile speakers who are leaders in a wide variety of professions.

In photo above (from left) at Thursday’s grand opening of the Pamela Lavin Bernstein Center for Advising: Kathy Woughter, vice president of Student Affairs; academic advisers Mariah Evans, Shelby O’Rourke and Kassie McCarn; Executive Director Nadine Shardlow; and Pamela Lavin Bernstein ’71.