A. Major issues addressed by the committee during the 2014–15 year

One of the major issues the committee worked on this academic year was a benchmarking survey of how academic advising was conducted at both small colleges and at our peer institutions. Dana Hebreard serves as the Chair of the Small Colleges and Universities Commission for NACADA (National Academic Advising Association). In this role, she surveyed member institutions in this division via an on-line survey tool. We used a similar survey and contacted advising directors/managers at our peer institutions and asked to complete a modification of the NACADA survey. At the time of this writing, the results of these surveys are being compiled and analyzed for a formal report. Our hope is that the results of this survey will help us understand what we are already doing well at Calvin with respect to advising and what are some things that we could learn and improve upon. A preliminary summary of the survey results is as follows:

1. The Results seem to indicate that:
   • Quality advising is more important in larger institutions than smaller
   • Dedicated advising days were evident in both large and small institutions, although not evident at every institution
   • Most institutions do not evaluate their advisors
   • Some institutions offer some training
   • Calvin is unique among the larger institutions because the academic advising reporting structure is in the academic division

2. The Calvin distinctives with respect to advising center on Education as a key word:

3. Advising is (should be) an opportunity for student learning,
   • Evaluation of advisors provides feedback to help improve,
   • Advisor training provides education.
   • Institutions of Calvin’s size don’t tend to do as much faculty advising, they enlist professional advisors.

Another area concerning Passport advising that we worked on was the inclusion of parents into the Charting your Course sessions. The inclusion of parents was prompted by a request from the Parent’s Council as well as feedback from Passport advisors that parents and students were not on the same page with respect to classes during the Passport advising sessions. As part of this discussion, we suggested that there be more “major/program” session divisions in order to better accommodate the special needs/interests of specific majors/programs. We suggested that all Charting your Course sessions begin with a video clip that helps frame the importance of the Liberal Arts and the Core courses.

The Academic Advising Committee examined a variety of other issues this year.

Dana Hebreard and Julie Yonker met with the Provost to highlight the importance of advising at Calvin College and advising’s role within the Strategic Plan.

1. We worked with the Deans, Provost and CSR to streamline the advisor evaluations into a more readably efficient format.

2. We discussed how to meet advisor’s needs in the New Advisor Training (Fall) and the Lunch and Learn (Spring).

3. We discussed two new “advising” roles this academic year, namely the First Year Business Advisor and the Pre-Health Advisor/Liaison. During the 2014–2015 academic year, the Business Department piloted a dedicated person to serve as an academic advisor for all first year students. The evaluations indicated that this individual had a higher overall evaluation (5.54) than the business department (5.34) or the college in general (5.26). This seems to indicate that student appreciated the availability (5.74) and her relatability. One student noted: “She was
able to answer all my questions and knew who I need to contact in order to get my summer plans all in order. She makes sure you know what you need to take in order to reach your goals.”

B. **Actions brought before Faculty Senate**

None

C. **Other actions, not involving Faculty Senate, that the committee initiated or implemented**

1. Some members of the committee and the Calvin community attended the on-site Webinar: Academic Advising and Social Justice: Privilege, Diversity and Student Success. This Webinar was approved as fulfilling FEN credit.
2. Some members of the committee attended a Jobzology training and discussion concerning the instruments used in this on-line survey/feedback instrument. We discussed how Jobzology could be beneficial in advising, especially the vocational aspect of advising.

D. **Issues that will continue to be before the committee next year.**

1. We will continue discussing the issue of first year advising and should the business department model be extended to other disciplines within the college.
2. We will continue to examine pre-Health advising and work with the administration to ascertain if a proper professional advisor position can be created.