

Prof. Farley, chair of the Aviation Science Department, was selected through a competitive process to become one of two Portfolios of Excellence (POE) faculty advisors for Project Compass during the 2009/2010 academic year. Each POE advisor will help recruit the pilot group of students and mentor 25 students during the pilot year. He will also help the Project Compass Student Programming subgroup to develop the advising protocols that will shape and expand the POE beyond the Project Compass target population to the entire student body.

Bridgewater was the recipient of a Project Compass Grant that awards the college up to 200,000 dollars a year for four years to help the campus develop and refine programming and infrastructure supporting underserved segments of the Bridgewater student population and, in so doing, improve the quality of academic and student life for the entire campus. For the purposes of the grant, Bridgewater has identified its underserved population as first generation students, students of color, and low income students. Among students who were first-time freshmen in the fall of 2008, this population represented 42% of the cohort.

As a part of the initiatives funded by the grant, the POE is a portfolio-based advising program housed jointly in academic and student affairs that demands students be mindful of their progress through their Bridgewater career, both academically and otherwise, improving their quality of experience while at Bridgewater and raising their expectations for quality of life beyond college. The POE encourages students to attend to their scholarly and co-curricular pursuits earlier on in their academic career and with purpose.

Students participating in the POE will create and maintain a portfolio of accomplishments and activities, both curricular and co-curricular, under the guidance of their POE advisor. This portfolio will reflect student interests, choice of major, availability and effort, academic strengths and weaknesses, and long-term academic and life goals. Advisors would take on the critical task of helping students to reflect, in writing and in conversation, on their experiences before, during, and after the semester. This material would be stored electronically. POE Advisors will be supported in their efforts by a student advisor who would work with the same 25 student cohort as the advisor. Additionally, students would still maintain their advising relationships with the Academic Achievement Center and/or their major advisor.