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## Letter From the Editor: 50 Years of the Division of Undergraduate Studies

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*The Mentor* is managed by and was founded at the Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) at Penn State University. DUS is an advising unit dedicated to students who have not yet declared a major. As such, it champions academic exploration and the important role advisers play in helping students find their purpose and footing. Beyond supporting individual students, DUS is a hub for ideas and discourse on academic advising, hosting not only *The Mentor* but also an annual conference, contributing to the scholarship and practice of advising well beyond Penn State.

DUS celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023. This volume of *The Mentor* features two articles that reflect on its history and role in the field of academic advising. In an article adapted from her keynote address at the 2023 Penn State Conference on Academic Advising, Janet Schulenberg situates DUS within the broader history of how advising emerged in American higher education. Advising was established at different institutions, at different times, for different needs. This lack of common identity and underlying philosophy complicates the leading role advisers should play in how “student success” is defined and achieved.

Hilleary Himes discusses the legacy of Eric White, the second director of DUS, and argues that his approach to leadership serves as a model for how administrators can champion advising scholarship. Indeed, White supported the early careers of both Himes and Schulenberg, among other influential advising scholars. Both of their articles illustrate how the histories of particular institutions can provide insight into how advising can be improved more broadly.

In addition to these pieces about DUS, Grey and van den Wijngaard present an innovative tool for stakeholders with varying backgrounds and opinions to engage in meaningful conversation about advising. The tool allows participants to see differences in how they approach advising and create a shared basis for developing their practices. In other words, they provide one potential starting point towards addressing the lack of common identity and philosophy that Schulenberg raises in her historical analysis.

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