

Committee on Academic Advising Report to SENATE May, 2016

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Chair: Jan Bishop (Physical Education & Human Performance)

The Committee undertook several initiatives this year:

- Gain a better understanding of current advising practices
 - Reports were given by each of the School's Advising Center Representatives to provide background on what occurs.
 - Additional information was gathered from members of the committee on departmental level advising.

Outcome:

"Good Advising Practices" document was created and disseminated to all the faculty through the Provost's Office during Spring Advising. (Appendix A)

- DegreeWorks
 - Informed by the registrar that this software had been selected for advising at CCSU and would be implemented over the next couple of years. At the request of the registrar, CAA developed 2 documents to assist with the transition to DegreeWorks.

Outcomes:

- Developed a dropdown menu to be used by academic advisers university-wide. (Appendix B)
- Developed an introductory statement for DegreeWorks for advisors concerning note writing guidelines. (Appendix C)
- Guidelines on what to digitally write on a shared student advising file (in progress and to be linked to from DegreeWorks)

- Non-matriculated Student Advising
 - Discussion concerning part-time non-matriculated students, their need for advising and/or information was discussed.
 - **Proposed Outcome:** access to information was discussed and the committee identified the need to develop additional information to be placed on the web to assist non-matriculation students know how to find advice and handle issues such as pre-requisite waivers etc.

- Preliminary look at by-laws – to be continued Fall 2016
 - New practice: Identify a Chair for the following year from the existing committee.
 - Debate
 - Pro: Provides continuity for next year, someone who can call first meeting.
 - Con: New members will not have chance to vote or run for chair until second year of service.

Recommendations

- Reach out to SGA to get a student representative on the committee. Position exists.
- Continue to collaborate with the Registrar as DegreeWorks roles out.
- Develop a Notetaking Advice List for CAA website since DegreeWorks has a link to the site stating as much.
- Continue to collect “Good Advising Practices” and examples of advising forms for dissemination to advising faculty.
- Review the bylaws including establishing a policy for electing the officers.
- Develop the registrar’s information section for non-matriculated students concerning “advice” and place links in appropriate location(s).

Appendix A: “Good Advising Practices”

Hello Faculty Advisors!

The Academic Advising Committee wishes to share with you some advising ideas gleaned from veteran advisors. We offer them informationally, not as a standardized practice to which one must adhere. In fact, some of the ideas may be more suited to one school than another.

We hope that your next two weeks are filled with many meaningful conversations with your students!

Advising Ideas:

1. As soon as the course listings for the next semester appear, e-mail advisees with a list of available appointment times (rather than waiting for the official advising period). In that e-mail mention that if a student wants to change majors or advisors now is the time to do so.
2. Make early announcements in all classes that students should be making appointments with their advisors.
3. Use a standard form (of your own design that fits your program) for each advisee during each registration advising period. Fill out parts of the form in advance for advisees who have appointments, and fill out the rest while the student is present. Printing out the form signals the end of the advising session. The student has a typed copy of the advisor’s suggestions, and the advisor has an electronic copy for reference.
4. Develop and use a check sheet for discussing items such as application to the professional program, cross endorsement credits, minors, required examinations or certifications, community engagement work etc. Date the discussions.

5. Ask about careers, and with information on advising forms from previous semesters, track changing career goals. Discuss varied career paths and emphasize that career changes, and returns to graduate or professional school later in life, etc., are common.
6. When an advisee has difficulty with a course, express enthusiasm for the subject, whatever it is, and then make connections between that course and the student's interests. Ex. When the calculus required for the biology major is the difficult course, point out uses of calculus in biology with emphasis on the areas of biology of most interest to that student.
7. When a student is in the office for any reason, and time permits, ask a leading question ("How's the semester going?" "What's your major?"). Such questions can evoke answers that lead to long discussions about various difficulties, possibly changing majors, etc., that in turn sometimes lead to suggestions that a student contact TLC, Counseling, or CACE.
8. Run a degree evaluation before the student comes in, review it for problems, and have it handy when the student arrives. This also means it will pull up faster as it has "loaded" recently.
9. Recommend students run their degree program ahead of time and develop a plan and course schedule to bring with them. The advisor can then look for errors and offer ideas that will enhance the student's plan. This encourages and empowers students to be in charge of their education.
10. Have students' Pipeline page open when they arrive and use it to fact-check what they tell you about their major, minor, transfer credits, GPA, and anything else relevant to the advice you give them: it's surprising how often they are wrong (or Pipeline is).
11. If they come in saying "I just need [PIN, signature, override, etc.]," give them the full work-up anyway. It's surprising how often they don't know what they need to know.
12. Set aside time after each advising meeting to do follow-up while it's fresh: update paperwork, send a note to the Registrar's Office to correct an error, write a note to a chair in another department about a 1XX course that needs evaluation....
13. Keep a file of frequently-used forms (Course Substitution, Change of Major/Minor, blank Curriculum Sheets, etc.) and a list of useful phone numbers (Registrar, School-based Advising Center, Dean's Office, Financial Aid, etc.), and fill out the form and/or make the call while the student is with you. Have them leave with the form (and tell them where the next stop is) and/or the answer.
14. Keep a list of the advisees you see (those assigned to you as well as those who wander in for help because they heard you were a good advisor), and note how long you spent with each. Add it up and note it in your annual review/tenure/promotion portfolio.
15. Greet the student with eye contact and ask with genuine interest how the semester is going.
16. Make private notes on personal items shared such as loss of a parent, raising younger siblings, playing on a sports team, in clubs, where the student works. Review these before the student's next appointment.

17. Explain to the student that it is the advisor's job is to advise, not to judge. That it is the student's job to make the final decision on things like how many credits s/he can handle, whether to change majors etc.
18. Try to maintain an advising state of mind throughout the semester whenever meeting with a student in any class, major or general education.

If you have additional good ideas, the committee would love to hear from you. **Grow our list** of good ideas by sending yours to Jan Bishop (bishopj@ccsu.edu), Chair, Academic Advising Committee.

Appendix B: Degree Dropdown Menu

- Reviewed student's DegreeWorks worksheet and progress in general education, and major/minor requirements
- Discussed academic standing and factors that contributed to current GPA.
- Advised students on course schedule/Adjusted course schedule.
- Discussed summer/winter course options.
- Discussed implications of withdrawing from course(s).
- Discussed repeat policy.
- Advised student to confirm that all AP scores/transfer credits appear on CCSU transcript.
- Discussed major selection and/or assistance available to help student choose a major.
- Discussed process for gaining admission to the major/professional school.
- Encouraged student to apply to professional program by the official deadline.
- Encouraged student to complete tests/certifications/licensure required for major or career.
- Encouraged student to explore (experiential learning/study abroad/extra-curriculars)
- Student was advised to apply for graduation by the official deadline.
- Discussed student's career plans.
- Referred student to ... (fill in box)
- Student did not attend scheduled advising appointment.

Appendix C: Note Guidelines

The following "Note Guidelines" text appears on DW and refers to our website where next year we can work on getting up some information for advisors.

Use notes to help students recall the advice they received and to help future advisors understand the advice that students received.

Notes Guidelines:

- Notes must be academic related and contain no personal content.
- Notes are viewable to the student.
- Notes are subject to FERPA and records retention rules.

For more information about advising notes, visit the [Committee on Academic Advising website](#).

Once the Save Note button is clicked, the note cannot be edited or removed