

## Academic Advising Recommendations November 2012

**The Role of Faculty**—Help students devise an educational program that's faithful to the College's educational goals and refer students as needed to campus services and resources

**The Overarching Objective**—Make the advising process more methodical and thoughtful

### Core Recommendations

- Centralize Self-Reflection in Relation to the Educational Goals
- Create a *Faculty & Student Advising Handbook*
- Centralize Advising Resources on the Website
- Create an Advising Assessment Process to Ensure Adequate Engagement
- Add Class Deans/Administrative Advisors

### Centralize Self-Reflection in Relation to the Educational Goals

- Create *A Guide for New Students* that helps them begin thinking about the liberal arts and details the process of matriculation
- Pre-Matriculation Essay and Provisional Educational Plan  
Summer submissions in preparation for Orientation Week advising meetings
- Concentration Declaration Essay and Educational Plan  
Require students to devise a Formal Educational Plan in consultation with a faculty member in the intended concentration and acquire their approval

**Rationale**—Currently, there are no mechanisms in place to prompt students to think broadly about their education in relation to the College's educational goals. A Pre-Matriculation Essay and Provisional Educational Plan would allow them to think seriously about their own personal educational aims and serve as the basis for an initial advising conversation that places the short-run project of course selection within the context of the long-range project of designing a course of study. Likewise, a Concentration Declaration Essay and Educational Plan would provide students with an opportunity to reflect upon their educational experience as they approach the halfway point and tweak their educational plan as they choose and embark upon a concentration.

## **Create a Faculty & Student Advising Handbook**

- It should clearly describe the mission of advising, the specific nature of advising relative to class year, and the responsibilities of both advisors and advisees
- It should be a much more process oriented document that outlines advising timetables and agenda items for specific advising meetings

**Rationale**—Currently, the *Pre-Concentration Advisor Manual* serves as a quick guide to the registration process and compendium of reference material that says little about the process of developing an educational plan. Providing faculty and students with a *Handbook* that outlines specific advising objectives, obligations, and timelines, as well as resources will make the process of working with students to help them develop and refine their educational plans more focused and more manageable.

## **Centralize Advising Resources on the Website**

- Create an online version of the handbook that explains the expectations and the process
- Create detailed advising calendars and overviews of advising considerations that are relative to each specific class year
- Create an Advising webpage that lists all applicable forms, services, and resources and embed useful links to each within the online class year overviews

**Rationale**—Currently, there is no comprehensive advising resource that outlines advising in terms of a four-year college career. Providing one would help students plan accordingly. Currently, there is no central electronic clearinghouse of information for students and advisors. Creating one would provide the College with an opportunity to review all materials relevant to advising for consistency and the end product would allow students and advisors to find answers to questions much more quickly and efficiently.

## **Create an Advising Assessment Process to Ensure Adequate Engagement**

- Solicit annual advising evaluations from advisees

These evaluations would gauge attentiveness to advising responsibilities

They would also allow students to share impressions of the strengths or weaknesses of the advising system

- Include advising activities as part of the standard faculty annual report

This would make the annual report a more accurate reflection of the work that faculty do

It would also allow faculty to share their impressions of the strengths or weaknesses of the advising system

**Rationale**—Currently, there are no checks on advising as a process, and as a result, no mechanisms to warn of potential weaknesses and guide potential improvements. Additionally, there is no formal recognition of advising as a faculty function and no viable way of factoring it into annual reviews.

### **Add Class Deans/Administrative Advisors**

- They would complement and coordinate with other constituencies (faculty, registrar, student affairs, etc.) in an effort to facilitate a successful transition to college, a successful college career, and a successful transition to life beyond college
- They would closely monitor academic progress and advise students experiencing academic difficulties
- They would advise students facing personal problems or formal campus proceedings
- They would coordinate faculty involvement
  - Faculty advising assignments, training, and workshops
- They would coordinate class specific processes and programming
  - Pre-matriculation submissions
  - Miscellaneous events and info sessions focusing on concentrations, study abroad, internships, etc.

**Rationale**—Currently, our advising program is highly decentralized. As a result, faculty advisors take on a variety of different roles in relation to their advisees. Additional deans could serve as readily accessible resources and advocates to help students deal with needs and issues beyond the realm of academic planning. In addition, they could also develop and administer programs and programming that integrate various educational and experiential considerations into the advising process.