

End of Year Report of the Advisement and Registration Council for 2010-2011

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The A &R Council had a very busy and productive year during which we addressed all of the standing and most of the additional charges. We held informational discussions with various campus leaders such as Jae Kim from Instructional Technology, Ken Schneider from Student Services, Kathy Malanga and Murli Natrajan from the UCC Council, and Gladys Scott from Languages and Cultures Department. We administered the faculty survey of advisers and received nearly a 70% response rate, and we presented the findings of the survey and recommendations to the Faculty Senate on March 22nd and April 12th.

Standing Charges: 1. *Review advisement and registration policies and procedures, and recommend revisions and/or new policies as needed for both undergraduate and graduate processes.*

2. *Identify problems and recommend means for improvement in advisement and registration procedures.*

3. *Work with administrators involved in areas of Advisement and Registration to recommend ways to facilitate policy implementation.*

To continue the work of the A &R Council from the year before, the A &R Council invited Jae Kim on October 25, 2010 to discuss the ongoing work to generate a Frequently Asked Questions on advising tab on the WPU website. Kim demonstrated the “Ask Willy P” web page and explained that prospective and current students who had questions about the university could get them answered there. Another assistance page – “Ask STC (Student Technology Consultants)” was discussed.

To collect information about current faculty advising at WPU and how to improve it, the Advisement and Registration Council designed and created an online survey in fall 2010. With help from John Runfeldt and Jane Zeff from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, the survey of faculty advisors was sent out on December 1, 2010 and closed January 3, 2011. It was sent to a total of 1,119 WPU faculty members, including 379 full-time regular faculty, 15 part-time regular faculty, 651 adjuncts, and 74 teaching professionals. We added the “PLEASE RESPOND ONLY IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY AN ADVISOR” text to both the

email and the introductory page of the web survey. We received 189 responses out of the 271 persons with one or more advisees during the fall 2010 semester. This was close to 70% (69.74%) response rate. The Council authored and delivered the Summary Results and Recommendations of WPU Survey of Faculty Advisors to the Executive Council of the Faculty Senate in early March. The co-Chairs, Thomas Fallace and Esther Martinez presented the report to the Senate on March 22nd and April 12th.

Based on the findings of the survey, and our meeting with Gladys Scott from Languages and Cultures Department to discuss the foreign language requirement (see below), the following recommendations were issued to improve advising at WPU:

1. That a first-tier "Advising" tab be created in Banner that would include information from any and all University sources having to do with advisement and/or registration. That all information be carefully screened before being loaded on to this page, to be sure it is accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date. That this information be updated on a regular basis.
2. That degree audits be further modified so that all graduation requirements and placements (Basic Skills, foreign language) are clearly noted. That registration for any foreign language course be blocked in the absence of a placement score or waiver from the Department of Languages and Cultures; and that registration for a language course at a level lower than the placement level be blocked by Banner.
3. That the University evaluate whether the Office of the Registrar is adequately staffed; staff should be able to answer and return phone calls during registration periods, update the degree audits more quickly, and deal with other emerging advising and data entry issues in a timely manner.
4. That the University further develop and support a more consistent program of advisor training and support. Some suggested elements of such a program: Hold initial training sessions for full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and staff advisors on the model of Blackboard and WAC training sessions; holding sessions long enough (half or full days) to cover all the necessary relevant material and allow for some hands-on learning via case studies; cover all university- and College-wide aspects of advising in initial training sessions; include hands-on case studies; have participation be compensated (as for Blackboard and WAC Institutes); train new advisees before the beginning of their first semester as advisors; hold sessions on specific topics; monthly ITE-style sessions; re-establish a corps of Master Advisors within each College who would be qualified to act as a resource to other advisors in their College; compensate them; provide for exchange of information between departments of a College on major, minor and certification program requirements; provide and maintain, with updates when necessary, a comprehensive on-line Advisors' Manual, and also issue a brief (10 to 20 pages) printed "digest"

of updated resources and information related to advising each year. This resource would include basic advising information and draw attention to recently added changes and resources

5. That the University, Colleges, and, Departments make an effort to maintain the same assignments of advisees to a specific advisor throughout a student's career.

6. That Banner allow for navigating among documents and screens (including the degree audit) and other links within Banner. Allow for split screens.

7. That Deans and Department Chairs coordinate the dissemination of timely information on their specific programs and majors within their own Colleges and to other departments and Colleges on a consistent basis. A revived system of Master Advisors (see #3) may be of assistance in this effort.

8. That the online directory of faculty and staff in offices be improved so that the position/title of each person is added to the existing data. This would provide direction in knowing whom to contact with questions and concerns. In addition, a list of persons in offices involved with admissions, registration and advisement, with contact information, should be included on the proposed "Advisors" tab in Banner and in the brief paper summary of useful information.

9. That incoming students be trained/ informed, during orientation or (for transfer students) when they are accepted for admission, about the registration and advisement process, what to expect and what is expected of them. That students be given some explanatory materials or "road maps" in their packets and that advisors receive a copy of these materials.

Additional Charges for 2010-2011:

1. Work with the Office of Student Accounts and the Office of Student Services to make the billing process user-friendlier for students.

The A &R Council invited Ken Schneider to meet with Council on November, 15, 2010. Schneider provided an overview of the present and future missions of the Office of Student Services. This office was created to provide a consolidated student-friendly service point. Currently located in Morrison Hall, this office provides staff and services to students for records/transcripts and payments. These services had previously been available in College Hall. Planned renovations (2012) will incorporate Financial Aid and Admissions staff to this location and will ultimately offer a one-stop place for students. Highlights of this conversation: advisors need to know that timelines affect registration and financial aid; sharing information about the windows for registration and payment may help students; this is clearly stated (in red) online when students register, but additional communication from advisors may help; about 10% of students are dropped each semester due to financial aid issues; registrar notifies Deans when

students will be dropped and instructors are requested to review their updated rosters; discussion continued about how to handle dropped students – should they be encouraged or discouraged from attending class? Will they be re-instated? Will they be able to catch up if they do miss class while resolving the financial issues? This is handled inconsistently across departments and colleges leading to confusion for faculty and students. Do we need a “drop-dead” deadline – point of no return after which-students may not be re-instated? College of Science and Health has instituted such a policy; the OSS has conducted (?) (also, when was survey conducted?) a point-of-service survey and responses show (?-results in?) that students seem to appreciate the combined service point on main campus.

Schneider forwarded the Council examples of communication his office sends to faculty and students, a grid of interdepartmental dates and windows (internal document), and information about the breakdown of tuition payment (check, e-check, credit card, cash). Schneider compared payments taken from July 7, 2010 to December 15, 2010 for the fall 2010 semester. Student chose to make 12,738 distinct payments via electronic checking/savings for a total of \$18,074,963.94 and 2,233 distinct payments via credit card for a total of \$3,680,690.11. The split for this period: roughly 17% of payments for tuition and fees were made via credit.

2. Work with the Office of Testing to establish an effective system of communicating Basic Skills and Foreign-Language placement exam schedules to Registration Services and academic departments. Post dates and communicate this information on a centralized web location for all to see.

The A & R Council invited Gladys Scott from the Department of Languages and Cultures on March 7th to discuss the foreign language requirement. She clarified some of the more confusing or unfamiliar points related to languages and advising. This information is available from the L&C department webpage but not on the Registrar’s page: http://www.wpunj.edu/cohss/departments/lang_cul/foreign-language-requirement.dot. Of interest to advisors: the foreign language requirement is a graduation requirement and not a GE (or UCC) requirement; all incoming freshmen are tested for basic skills and language proficiency; transfer students are inconsistently tested for language proficiency. In either case, the language proficiency test is not required, as are the Basic Skills tests, and students may walk out of the test; students may access these placement tests from any computer in the Atrium; advisors should encourage students to take the test, especially those students who will place out of the requirement (scenario, native speaker does not take proficiency test and then enrolls in 100 level class for native language); students scoring above 210 level can test out of the requirement. Those who place out of the requirement must stop by the L&C department and obtain a waiver. This process should be automated and linked with Banner. The Department of Language and Culture is conducting research to update the language proficiency tests (one for

each language taught). The current tests are nearly 15 years old and no computer-based tests are currently available for languages with growing enrollments, such as Chinese and Japanese.

3. Continue to work with the Advisement Office to ensure that all advisers are clear on how to guide transfer students based on the new community college transfer agreement and that programs in Banner have been adjusted accordingly.

Although we did not speak with anyone specifically about this, issues related to the updating and revision of Banner are addressed in our recommendations above.

4. Recommend an integrated advisement system.

See recommendations above.

5. Work with the UCC council and appropriate campus offices on faculty development to meet the advisement needs of various co-existing cohorts.

The A & R Council invited Kathy Malanga & Murli Natrajan from the UCC Council on March 7th to discuss the implementation of the UCC Council. They provided an update of the implementation of the UCC and its impact on advising. They distributed three documents: UCC Advisement Guidelines, UCC Courses approved as of February 2011, and UCC Framework. The UCC Council is in the process of meeting with advisors in each College, as well as with Athletics, Academic Support, Community College Transfer Counselors, and the Advisement Center. These sessions provide an orientation to advising students in the new Core. There are 4 student scenarios: 1. new incoming first year students – these students will not need advising until spring 2012 for following year 2. transfer students with AA or AS degrees – these students will need to take one 300 level writing intensive course to meet the Core requirement; 3. transfer students without a degree- transcripts will be reviewed and mapped to the Core when equivalent courses exist; 4. continuing GE cohort – for a short time, the current course numbers will continue to be offered and available to meet requirement. Forthcoming from UCC – dedicated webpage linked from Academics page; course mapping list; and student scenarios/case studies for advising. Course mapping: a list of equivalent courses will be created and shared with advisors, HIST 101 = HIST 1030 for example. Lynn Orr of Advisement Center created a curricular control sheet for the UCC courses and includes foreign language and FYE requirements. This is a one-sided sheet. The other side will contain the major requirements. The group discussed the importance of ongoing advising training/support and related topics such as: revitalizing the Master Advisor program, establishing ongoing monthly brown bag advising review sessions, working with Center for Teaching Excellence to create programming.

6. Survey professional and academic advisors on their experiences of the advisement and registration processes on campus.

See explanation of survey above and the Summary Results and Recommendations of WPU Survey of Faculty Advisors report.

Suggested Charges for 2010-2011

The day before Fallace and Martinez presented the Summary Results and Recommendations of WPU Survey of Faculty Advisors, the Provost announced the following:

To support the University's efforts for achieving improved undergraduate retention rates of first year students and ultimately to improve student persistence toward graduation, several changes will be made to the manner in which we provide academic advisement to new students beginning with students entering in Fall 2011. With the exceptions of students admitted into several targeted programs, all new freshmen and all new transfer students who have not yet achieved sophomore status will receive academic advisement from the Career Development and Advisement Center (CDAC).

It should be noted that this reform was issued with no input from the A & R Council whatsoever, nor was the decision in any way informed by the results of the faculty survey on advising.

A & R Council recommends that the following charges should be added to the standing charges.

- 1. Work with the Career Development and Advisement Center to ensure that all University programs and majors are accurately presented by the professional freshman advisors*
- 2. Continue to work with the UCC Council and appropriate campus offices on faculty development to meet the advisement needs of various co-existing cohorts.*