

DEPAUW STUDENT GOVERNMENT

White Paper No. 9

A White Paper concerning the state of Advising

Introduction

DePauw University is an institution that prides itself on small class sizes and students having close relationships with their professors. DePauw Student Government believes one of the greatest opportunities for a student faculty connection is the advisor to advisee relationship. Advising plays a key role in insuring academic success for each student. From meeting with members of the Academic Affairs office it seems that their are resources available to both faculty and students help improve their relationship; however, at this time these resources are not used effectively. This white paper seeks to highlight some of the key issues in the current advising structure as well as offer some recommendations to deal with these issues.

Observations

Expectations

First, there is the lack of definition for the role of an advisor. After reviewing the material made available to professors the problems appears to be this information is not effectively shared with the student.

Number of Meetings

There also seems to be a lack of expectation for the number of meetings an advisee should have with their advisor. Student feedback reports that some students meet with their advisor two to three times a semester while others have rarely met with their advisor and are provided their necessary registration codes via email.

Academic Trouble Seeking Help

One issue that was highlighted when talking to students is a lack of understanding of how the hierarchy of Academic Affairs works at DePauw. Many students did not include their advisor as a person to talk to if they were having academic trouble or an issue with a specific professor.

Selecting a New Advisor

Our final observation was a lack of knowledge among students as to how they should go about selecting an advisor and what to do if an advisor leaves the University, either temporarily or permanently. Many students reported feeling lost with no sense of where to begin in the advisor selection process. There also appears to be some inconsistency on how to choose an advisor in regards to focus and concentration.

Recommendations

42 In order to help address some of the aforementioned concerns, the DePauw Student Government
43 proposes the following recommendations:

44 1) Define for students what the role of an advisor is by providing all students with a copy of the
45 advising syllabus (or something close to it). This document should include:

46 a) Providing a detailed list of expectations on behalf of both the student and the professor
47 as to what each is expected to do in the advisor/advisee role.

48 b) Include an advising component to the First Year experience. Go over the
49 aforementioned description of the advisor role with incoming students explaining the
50 importance of the advisor/advisee relationship. Additionally, have a meeting/conversation
51 at the end of the first year with guidance as to how to find a new advisor.

52 c) Include in this description the minimum number of meetings an advisor should be
53 having with his or her advisee.

54 d) Encouraging dialogue and discussion about career and life goals-- in addition to
55 classes.

56
57 2) Have each department consider a self-imposed cap and encourage each department to have a
58 conversation about the possible harms of having one professor taking on too many advisees.

59
60 3) Create a web or ladder explaining to students the structure of Academic Affairs and who
61 should be sought out for specific kinds of issues and/or concerns. This will help students work
62 effectively up the chain of command.

63
64 4) Generate one list that has each department's faculty along with each member's focuses and
65 concentrations. Some of the departments currently have this while others do not. This will make
66 it so that when a student is researching possible new advisors they are able to pick that faculty
67 member who applies most to their particular interests and direction.

68
69 5) If a faculty member is leaving campus permanently, temporarily, or needs to drop advisees for
70 some reason, that faculty member should alert their advisees to their need for a new advisor as
71 well as information on who to contact should a student need help.

72
73 6) Create a plan for double majors so that they are not getting conflicting advice from their
74 separate advisors. This may include an expectation of communication between the respective
75 advisors. This may apply to interdisciplinary majors as well.

76
77 **Conclusion**

78 In conclusion, Student Government feels that the advising role is extremely important for
79 every student no matter what their year or major. We feel that by taking a few simple steps this
80 relationship could accomplish even more and be all the more fulfilling for both students and
81 faculty members.

82
83 Aye ___40___
84
85 Nay ___1___
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87 Absent ___0___
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90 This **24th** day of **April, 2011**.

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93 SIGNED COPY IN DSG OFFICE

94 Christine Walker, President

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96 Attest:

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100 Tyler Hess, Secretary
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