



**Pursuing  
Excellence in the  
Undergraduate  
Student Experience**  
**Assessing and Improving  
Advising**

Prepared by

**The Center for Organizational  
Development and Leadership  
With the Guidance of the  
Academic Advising Task Force**



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## Foreword

The Vision Statement adopted by the University in 2000, affirms the University's dedication to a standard of quality that makes Rutgers a preferred choice for students, a first-rate intellectual environment for faculty, and an outstanding place to work for staff.

A commitment to understanding and improving the student experience is critical to this goal. As a university, we can take great pride in the fact that surveys show that by and large students are satisfied with the Rutgers' academic and co-curricular programs. At the same time, we want to make every effort to enhance the services we provide in all areas, and particularly those in which students express some degree of dissatisfaction. In studies conducted over the last few years, more than one-fourth of graduating students indicated dissatisfaction with: parking, dining services, transportation, and academic advising.<sup>1</sup> Efforts to analyze and address concerns are underway for three of the four. This study is being undertaken to address the issue of advising.

In his book, *Making the Most of College*,<sup>2</sup> Richard Light suggests that, "Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience." While few colleges and universities would argue with the statement, and most would pride themselves on their commitment to assisting students, many would admit that enhancements to current advising practices are in order. Rutgers is no exception. We, too, pride ourselves on providing assistance to students in this critically important area, and are committed to making those services even better.

This report has been submitted to the Office of the President and the Office of the University Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Executive Summary is intended for broader distribution and discussion throughout the University community with the hope that it will stimulate further improvement efforts in this important area of academic and student life.

The project has been led by the Center for Organizational Development and Leadership with guidance and support from members of the University Academic Advising Task Force:

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<sup>1</sup> *Rutgers Rising to the Challenge: The Undergraduate Experience (Vol. 1 & 2), August 1998.*

<sup>2</sup> *Richard Light, Making the Most of College, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.*



## Executive Summary

A review of studies conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning<sup>3</sup> indicates that 29% of graduating students, 22.8% of continuing students, and 36% of discontinuing students are dissatisfied with academic advising. While this general information exists, the sources of student dissatisfaction are not clear, nor do we know precisely what students would say needs to be improved.

The Academic Advising Task Force was formed to address these issues, and specifically to:

- Gather information on current approaches to – and problems with – advising from the perspective of those who oversee these activities
- Identify sources of student satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- Collect information on “best practices”
- Recommend improvements that would address existing problems and heighten student satisfaction

The committee focused its efforts on academic advising for first-year and transfer students in two phases of their Rutgers experience: a) from the point they indicated their intention to enroll at the University to the first day of classes; and b) during their first year of attendance.

Information was gathered through: 1) a survey sent to the deans of 11 Rutgers units responsible for admitting first-year students, and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in New Brunswick;<sup>4</sup> 2) focus groups involving a total of 30 students from three different campuses and 11 different units; and 3) a review of advising web sites at 39 other large institutions.

A majority of the academic units indicated that they have “open-door policies” for students who wish advising, and maintain a core of experienced advisors who relate well with students and who are interested in student needs. Additional strengths noted include the use of academic advising manuals, peer mentoring, and a formal evaluation of the student experience (including advising, admission, orientation and testing). There was general agreement that improvements in advising are needed, and they list among these increased resources devoted to advising, a computerized degree check system, better use of web technology, and strategies for making advising a more important and rewarded part of faculty work.

Focus group participants identified difficulty in scheduling appointments, limited opportunities to form personal relationships with advisors, and inadequate and limited referral information as major concerns. Responses also pointed to a minimal utilization of technology in current advising programs. A majority of the respondents referred to the *ArtSys*<sup>5</sup> system as an example of the kind of technological enhancement that can provide assistance in enhancing the effectiveness

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<sup>3</sup> *Rutgers Rising to the Challenge: The Undergraduate Experience (Vol. 1 & 2), August 1998.*

<sup>4</sup> *Participant units included: Camden College of Arts and Sciences, Cook College, College of Nursing, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Douglass College, School of Engineering, Faculty of Arts and Sciences (New Brunswick/Piscataway), Livingston College, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Newark College of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers College, University College (Camden, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Newark Campuses).*

<sup>5</sup> *A joint project of Rutgers University and 19 community colleges using a web-based information system designed to ease the transition from a New Jersey community college to Rutgers. Using the system, students can obtain course-to-course transfer information as well as an outline of courses for academic majors at each college with Rutgers University, determine course requirement for the first two years of each Rutgers baccalaureate program, and submit their transcripts electronically.*

of current advising programs. There was, however, a strong sentiment that technologies not replace the face-to-face interaction between students and advisors. While insights gained from a small number of focus groups can be very useful for identifying themes and areas for further study – as was the case in this instance – the Task Force is aware that such insights may be limited in terms of generalization across the broader student population.

Highlights from the review of on-line strategies at other institutions included web-based advising systems that allow students to produce “what if” reports related to a possible change in major, and the ability to keep up with degree progress; on-line advising handbooks and toolkits; faculty advising awards; and one university that provides on-site advising for new admits from across the country by holding sessions at major metropolitan airports.

Based on the information gathered, five problem areas were identified: 1) no formal advisor recruitment programs; 2) few formal advising evaluation processes; 3) no compensation for faculty-staff advisors, with the exception of one school; 4) limited utilization of web and e-mail technology in the advising process university wide; and 5) limited self-help material, unevenly distributed to students.

Information gathered to date can serve to advance next steps, including further dialogue, broader data gathering, the creation of forums for “best practices” sharing, and a general exploration of ways to best use existing resources to enhance the effectiveness of advising systems and the satisfaction of students for whom they are designed.

To address these needs, the Task Force offers the following recommendations:

1. Focus on all aspects of undergraduate advising, including the pre-declaration of major period – normally from the student’s notification of attendance through the end of the sophomore year—as well as post-major-declaration period.
2. Reframe advising as a *partnership* that would go beyond class selection to focus on how students succeed in and out of the classroom. Develop clearly defined expectations and responsibilities for students and academic units. Articulate what students can expect from the unit, and what the unit expects of students.
3. Investigate the use of web-based advising assistance for ALL colleges (technological capabilities defined and implemented on university level with flexibility for college-specific applications). Attention should be given to leveraging the use of computing resources and offering students some consistency of service. For example, creating a single web-based point of contact for students that would provide general information and allow links to college/major-specific information.
4. Implement a University degree check system to allow for better coordination between departments and students/colleges, and up-to-date monitoring of the academic career by students and academic advisors.
5. Identify internal “best practices” within current advising programs as well as external practices identified through the benchmarking study. Establish forums for discussion and dissemination of best practices.

6. Develop systematic and ongoing approaches to exploring perceptions, needs, expectations and satisfaction levels of the larger student population.
7. Create forums with students for discussing current practices and inadequacies. Encourage academic units to host these sessions for their students, and to share results and insights broadly within the community.
8. Develop a regular segment for RUTV that features faculty talking about particular disciplines, courses and potential careers to provide more detailed information about available areas of study. Allow students to call in. Stream live over the web with e-mail link. Archive the “interviews” and make them available to the students on an on-going basis.
9. Work with Retired Faculty Association to assist with the advising process.
10. Explore alternatives to the current method of focusing all advising within the course selection/registration timeframe. Consider “distributing” advising function throughout the year.
11. Collaboratively identify University standards for what constitutes a “good advising program,” and use them to develop collegiate programs. Consider:
  - Training
  - Printed materials
  - Web-based assistance AND personal attention
  - Attention to the environment in which advising is conducted
  - Clear delineation of the role of the faculty
  - Continuous learning from best practices in other organizations
  - Evaluation
12. Develop incentives and recognition for increased faculty ownership and involvement in advising activities and improvements to the process.
13. Explore adapting novel approaches from other institutions, such as a Transfer Center and First-Year Learning Communities (see page 12).



## Introduction

As part of its institutional reporting, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning periodically conducts surveys from which to assess undergraduates' experiences at Rutgers. Data is collected on a number of important areas related to the student educational experience, including services. In 1997, the most recent year for which data is available, advising was consistently noted as an area in which students felt improvements were needed.

A closer look at the advising data indicated that 29% of graduating students, 22.8% of continuing students, and 36% of discontinuing students were dissatisfied with academic advising.<sup>6</sup> While this summary is useful, details on exactly as to what students thought needed attention was not. Given the importance of advising in the early, pre-major-declaration stage of a student's academic experience, the committee focused its efforts on academic advising for first-year and transfer students in two phases of their Rutgers experience: a) from the point they indicate their intention to enroll at the University to the first day of classes; and b) during their first year of attendance. Specifically, the goals of the project were to:

- Gather information on current approaches to – and problems with – advising from the perspective of those who oversee these activities
- Identify sources of student satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- Collect information on “best practices”
- Recommend improvements that would address existing problems and heighten student satisfaction

### The Process

1. Deans of Rutgers 11 undergraduate units and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in New Brunswick were sent surveys with open-ended questions focused on advising program goals and objectives, the recruitment, training and evaluation of advisors, and the role of technology in the advising process.<sup>7</sup>
2. Five student focus groups were conducted to gain better insight into student expectations, the helpfulness of current practices, the overall perceptions of current programs, and possible improvements.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Rutgers Rising to the Challenge: The Undergraduate Experience* (Vol. 1 & 2), August 1998.

<sup>7</sup> *Participant units included: Camden College of Arts and Sciences, Cook College, College of Nursing, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Douglass College, School of Engineering, Faculty of Arts and Sciences (New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus), Livingston College, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Newark College of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers College, University College (Camden, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Newark Campuses)*

<sup>8</sup> *One hundred participant invitations were mailed via campus or internal mail for each group between February 29 and March 8, 2000. Each participant received his/her invitation no less than 18 days and up to 6 weeks prior to the focus group event. The initial response rate for those who accepted was approximately 3%. A reminder notice was sent to participants from the first three groups via e-mail. This resulted in an increase of only two participants per group. Because of the low response rate, a second group of an additional 300-400 participants was sent invitations via e-mail two weeks prior to the actual focus sessions. This increased confirmations by about 3 or 4 people per group. The e-mail reminders, titled "We haven't heard from you," and the second wave of invitations yielded a large influx of responses from people who were unable to attend, unlike the first set of invitations. Random phone calls and e-mail responses from those who could not attend revealed that most people simply had class conflicts or personal obligations at the times selected. Several students commented that the potential for "winning" a \$250 gift certificate to the computer store was not a significant motivator.*

3. A web-based search of over 35 universities was conducted to gain a better sense of how others approach advising of first-year and transfer students.

## **Key Findings**

Information gathered from these sources indicated several clearly defined strengths and areas for improvement within the University's current advising programs.

### **Strengths**

- Program Diversity – A depth and diversity of approaches to advising currently exists within the University.
- Advising as a Priority – Strong programs exist in some schools, with some students perceiving advising as a University priority and others seeing commitment as less than adequate.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- Communication – While programs appear to offer a variety of services related to advising, not all students are taking advantage of these programs. In part, it is a matter of better communicating their availability.
- Accessibility – In almost all units, the number of students wishing/needing assistance on advising-related matters exceeds the number of available staff. Many students indicated difficulty in scheduling advising-related appointments.
- Recruitment – It appears that no *formal* advisor recruitment programs currently exist.
- Evaluation – Program improvements appear to be based on informal feedback systems. Few formal advising evaluation processes are in place.
- Recognition – No systematic or consistent recognition for the advising role appears to be in place. One school compensates faculty/staff advisors.
- Personal/Technology Balance – Deans and students noted a strong desire that technologies not replace the face-to-face interaction between students and advisors, but simultaneously noted a need for the enhanced use of technology to support the advising process as University-wide utilization of technology to support advising is limited.
- Information – Distribution of self-help materials is limited and uneven.
- Relationship Building – While all parties consider this an important aspect of advising, students noted few opportunities to form personal relationships with advisors.

## Findings

To facilitate an understanding of information provided by the various groups, findings have been organized around the following major themes: 1) Program Philosophy and Goals, 2) Relationship-Building, 3) Attention and Accessibility, 4) The First-Year Experience, 5) Advisor Recruitment, Training and Compensation, 6) Use of Technology in the Advising Process, 7) Information Resources, and 8) Advising Program Evaluation and Improvements, and 9) Changes Colleges Would Make to Improve Their Programs.

### 1. Program Philosophy and Goals

College deans indicate their aim is to provide individualized advising assistance based on a student's year in college (e.g., first-year, transfer with less than junior year status, transfer with junior year status, etc.), major, desired profession, academic goals, and/or career goals.

They also note goals of:

- Raising awareness of the vast array of educational opportunities at the University.
- Providing accurate, clear and readily accessible information about the University, college and departmental requirements and expectations.
- Creating strategies for academic success.
- Providing transfer students with transition assistance and equal opportunities for success in their new environment.

A review of the advising web sites of other universities shows a similar focus, with the following advising goals including, course selection, values and goals clarification, career counseling, and guidance on access to University services.

#### ➤ **Course Selection**

- Assist in selection of routine and department-specific class registration and development of academic program in connection with graduation requirements.
- Approve all designated educational transactions (registration schedule, change of major, graduation requirements).
- Answer general questions about college curriculum.

#### ➤ **Helping Students Clarify Values and Goals**

- Encourage students to explore aspects of their personal, intellectual, and emotional growth.
- Assist in developing and defining realistic educational and career goals.
- Assist in planning a program consistent with student abilities and interests.

#### ➤ **Exploring Educational and Career Options**

- Increase student satisfaction with the educational process.
- Assist in developing and defining realistic educational and career goals.
- Assist in monitoring and evaluating students' educational process.
- Discuss linkages and relationships between instructional program and occupational career.
- Identify career opportunities.

Almost all schools listed the following as weaknesses in their current advising programs:

➤ **Establishing Links to Broader University/Community Services**

- A severely overburdened workload due to limited financial and human resources.
- Integrating the institution's many resources to meet special education needs and aspirations.
- Helping students to look beyond the classroom for learning experiences (internships, research, community service, etc).
- Consulting on problems students may experience.
- Difficulty in compelling students to meet regularly with their advisors due to the use of automated registration systems.
- Difficulty in retaining quality advisors.
- Difficulty in ensuring equivalent competencies in policy, procedures, requirements and referrals among newer advisors through training or materials.
- Not taking full advantage of technology's capacity in relieving some of the workload that does not require face-to-face interaction (also affects the sharing of various kinds of advising-related information among deans, departments, and students).
- Difficulty in creating an understanding among the faculty and administration of the importance of this (advising) activity to both student development and the University's mission.

Among the unique advising programs noted in the web search were programs that focused on student convenience in advising and programs designed to advance timely progress toward the degree.

➤ **Novel Programs**

- Late afternoon and evening advising offered in dormitories by trained advisors and Resident Assistants: Evergreen University and Indiana University.  
Sessions are conducted by professional staff and trained students, and include evening and late night general services. Many other schools utilize resident assistants for this purpose as well.
- Midnight Advising: Evergreen University, Washington State.  
Students have access to after hour advising including contact information, catalog updates, syllabi, schedules, faculty info, workshops, and academic skills support in their residence halls.
- GradPact: University of Indiana, Bloomington.  
First-year students enrolling on this campus are eligible to sign up for a program that can help them graduate within four years or eight full semesters. The plan is guaranteed and, if followed correctly, should lead to graduation in four years. If it does not, the fifth year is free. For each of 124 undergraduate majors, a "curricular map" has been drawn that shows paths for meeting all the requirements on time. The maps also include "benchmarks," or specific goals to meet by specific times to stay on track toward degree. This plan was initiated with the full support of the University's president.

## 2. Relationship-Building

Deans' responses indicate a primary objective of current advising programs is to connect students with a variety of University faculty, students, and staff including peer and faculty advisors, and academic departments. The more fundamental objective of many advising programs is assisting students to build constructive relationships with their advisor(s), instructors, and peers, and encouraging teamwork as well as individual autonomy in oversight of their individual academic experiences.

The most commonly cited strengths that support relationship-building objectives include an open-door policy to students, a core group of interested and experienced advisors able to relate directly to their advisees' needs, and a commitment by the colleges and their faculty to provide sound advising services. Many colleges perceive advance assignments of advisors as a distinct advantage in relationship building, while other colleges specifically prefer to allow student choice and timeliness to determine who will advise a student at any particular time.

Depending on the college, advising responsibility falls to student affairs deans, departmental faculty, trained graduate students, and peers.

Based on focus group information, it would appear that the most assertive students had the highest levels of success and satisfaction with their advising programs. Less assertive students expressed frustration with what they more generally perceived as "difficulties in getting advising." Students' comments suggested a clear preference for assigned advisors rather than general walk-in hours. The primary reason cited most often was the ability to develop a personal, on-going relationship. Students found walk-in hours with random advisors less personal, making it difficult to establish a good rapport immediately or to get advice individualized to their unique goals.

In addition, they voiced a desire for the ability to speak with advisors within the departments in which they are contemplating study or intending to declare a major. Having advisors who were able to respond to student concerns and make suggestions in their best academic and career interests was deemed very important. Some colleges were cited as having done well in this area, while this kind of faculty access was clearly absent in others.

Active participation in the course selection process was considered critical. There was a sense from some students that they were excluded from this in their first semester. Increased personal assistance with scheduling was considered best, and some indicated students should be required to see their advisors before scheduling each semester. Students said they wanted more input from their advisors, particularly in the areas of course selection as it relates to developing well-rounded individuals and providing a broad foundation for career choices.

Focus group participants indicated a desire for assistance with a variety of academic concerns, including:

- Identification of potential academic problems and potential conflicts (academic difficulties and scheduling).

- Understanding which courses are best taken at which time in their academic careers. (Many students voiced a frustration with required prerequisites being offered once a year or less. Because they are unaware of this, a delay in graduation is often the result.)
- Understanding the University and course catalog, requirements – complicated by what is seen as jargon, and general expectations.
- Help with assessing the appropriateness of particular courses for their academic level. (Students are not always sure if a particular course may be too advanced for them and seek guidance on choosing courses appropriate for specific stages of their academic experience.)

Highlights from the web search indicate that a number of other institutions are finding ways to address the issue of building stronger bonds between students and faculty. Some interesting approaches include:

Orientation Week Policy Statement for Faculty: Arizona State University.

"All faculty, department chairs, and deans are expected to be present for duty on campus during orientation week, one week preceding the beginning of fall and spring semester instruction. During orientation week, freshmen, transfer, and continuing students who have not participated in early registration meet with their academic advisors and plan their programs."

Parent and Student Connection Projects: University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Telephone surveys are conducted by student orientation leaders each year. Students are contacted in the fall and parents in the spring in order to create a personal connection, allow participants to ask questions and express opinions, and gather information that helps UW-Madison provide better services. (Ten schools indicated offering some kind of parent orientation.)

### **3. Attention and Accessibility**

The students who participated in the focus groups were in general agreement that they want and need attention from their advisors. One perceived barrier is the failure of advising programs to recognize that many students are unable to meet with advisors during regular business hours because of extended science/art laboratories, or outside obligations. More flexible hours, and better advisor time management skills were noted as needed changes. Students said they often feel rushed, and left with many unanswered questions. Advisors often seemed to be disinterested, overworked, and even unfriendly at times. Again, a preference was expressed for advisors familiar with their interests and with whom they can develop a relationship over time. Students seek advisors with active listening skills, the ability to offer comfort and encouragement, and a willingness to help with career-related issues such as job hunting, resume writing, and networking.

Specifically, students would like to see advisors who are:

- Able to make recommendations about courses or careers in majors other than the ones in which they themselves teach.
- Able to provide accurate information about coursework that students may need to complete at the undergraduate level that will prepare them well or be required for entrance to graduate school.

- Able to assist transfers in selecting majors that allow for the transfer of the maximum number of credits.
- Able to help them recognize how much time it takes to commute from campus to campus and guide them accordingly in their course scheduling. (There was a general sense that most academic advisors currently were unable to respond to inquiries in this area.)

Focus group participants gave the School of Engineering Freshmen Services high praise in this area, being noted for the quick response time to in-person, telephone, and e-mail concerns and easy access to appointments. The College of Nursing was also praised for its accessibility to students and the high degree of personal attention provided. These highly valued qualities were achieved with mixed results at other colleges according to focus group participants.

Personal assistance with navigating the University system and identifying appropriate resources is highly desired by students, though frequently beyond their reach. Most students said they wanted more of this kind of assistance and personal attention at the beginning of their academic careers, with a goal of quickly becoming their own independent advocate. University College was particularly praised for the level of personalized attention given to students and its understanding of their unique issues. A common complaint among focus group participants was that their academic advisors lacked sufficient sensitivity to their individual needs, especially in the case of international and transfer students.

Transfer and returning students want access to the same information as that of first-year students. Transfer students were frustrated with their inability to graduate on time. They would like more assistance in achieving this goal. Students in all groups (all colleges) agreed that a more organized, formal advising system would be ideal. Most students would like to know more about the many academic avenues available to them at the university. A career-fair style set up with a booth for each major was suggested by several participants as was having students or instructors from each major speak at the various student orientations. Students would like to know more about the career possibilities of the various majors, the intensity of the academic programs, and program expectations to better help them decide on an appropriate major.

#### **4. The First-Year Experience**

Several Rutgers advising programs were noted as offering strong first-year programs.

- Douglass College assigns each student an individual advisor to serve as the primary advisor for at least three terms. This offers the prospect of continuity and personal interest that can be very significant in students' success and satisfaction.
- Livingston College provides an advisor for every first-year student who remains the key person with whom that student consults until declaring a major. At the beginning of the term, a primary advisor is designated for each entering class. The advisor's role is to examine the particular needs of students entering that year.
- Rutgers College and the Newark College of Arts and Sciences provide individual attention to all first-year and transfer students through their general advisors.

- The School of Engineering Freshmen Services provides quick responses to in-person, telephone, and e-mail concerns and easy access to appointments.

A review of web sites identified several programs with like goals and strategies.

Freshman Connection: Montclair State University.

Each first-year student is assigned a counselor who mentors the student through the first year and until declaration of a major. Students are expected to meet with their counselor a minimum of twice a semester.

Freshman Learning Communities: Montclair State University, University of Maryland, University of Indiana, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Arizona State University.

A group of approximately 20 students share enrollment in several classes and provide academic and social advantages to first-year students. Classes remain small to allow students to get to know one another, form study groups, and pursue academic excellence. Classes are sometimes grouped around themes - politics, science, language, culture, English, etc., or may reflect general education requirements of the school.

FYE - Freshmen Year Experience: First-year seminar program.

According to the *New York Times*,<sup>9</sup> approximately 70% of colleges and universities currently offer one- to three-credit semester-long classes for first-year students (including transfers) that focus on academic success, personal development, technology on campus, campus involvement, campus resources and how to use them, residential life, and future/career planning. Some universities group students by declared or intended major and try to place a faculty member or advisor from that field as class instructor/facilitator. Schools include Montclair State University, University of South Carolina, Long Island University, University of New Haven, Kean University, Ithaca, Air Force Academy, University of Maryland, George Washington University, University of Rhode Island, Blackburn College, Eastern New Mexico University, Northern Illinois University, William Penn College, Cottey College. (*Arizona State University and the University of South Carolina offer this class to transfers in a modified format.*)

Out-of-state Orientation Program: Arizona State University.

Five to six one-hour programs available at three out-of-state locations – Newark Airport, O'Hare Airport, and Los Angeles Airport. The sessions cover the same material as on-campus advising services workshops and as much as possible from the summer orientation program. Advisors are sent to different sites to assist with registration and answer questions concerning admissions, financial aid, registrar's office, etc.

Transfer Center: Washington State University.

The Center offers preliminary academic advising for transfer students seeking admission to Washington State University; provides incoming transfer students a clearly identified “point of contact” upon arrival at Washington State University; and assists transfers in developing academic goals and plans and realistically evaluates progress towards these goals. Staff works with career services to assist undecided transfers with an academic major search and selection. The Center also conducts outreach workshops on academic regulations and University procedures, advising, general University requirements, learning, and other academic strategies, both on and off campus. It also works with other WSU units, community colleges, and four-year institutions to facilitate effective and timely advising of transfer students. The Center also

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<sup>9</sup> *New York Times*, October 15, 1999, Section A, Page 1. <http://query.nytimes.com/search/abstract>  
 Center for Organizational Development and Leadership  
 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
 Pursuing Excellence in the Undergraduate Student Experience  
 Final Report  
 April 29, 2002

facilitates the development of articulation agreements between WSU colleges and departments and community colleges.

## **5. Advisor Recruitment, Training and Compensation**

### **Advisor Recruitment**

Survey responses indicate that a variety of strategies are used in advisor recruitment. Not all schools actively recruit advisors. Of those that do, referrals by current advisors and personal invitation were the most frequently used methods. (Newark FAS, Rutgers College, Cook College, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, and Douglass College.) Student peer advisors (Livingston College, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Douglass College, School of Engineering) are nominated by their own academic advisors or volunteers.

All peer advisors are required to be in good academic standing and are expected to have the capacity to relate to and understand the first-year experience. Departmental advisors are generally appointed by the chair or volunteer for the position. Camden FAS, the College of Nursing, and University College do not recruit advisors. In these units, advising is considered a primary duty of the professional staff. Livingston College and Rutgers College both noted difficulty recruiting and retaining enough volunteer faculty to do general advising for the incoming first-year population.

The use of peer advisors and student volunteers was noted in the web site review as well.

#### Masters of Education and Graduate Advising Programs:

Many colleges recruit from their pool of masters students who have expressed and demonstrated a genuine interest in teaching and student development.

#### Volunteers:

Many universities rely on volunteers to assist in various phases of the advising process. Sometimes volunteers are rewarded with special privileges such as early registration or a "thank you" dinner reception. Students are encouraged to participate to become more active in the university community and to build their own personal skills repertoire.

#### Service-Learning/Academic Credit:

Several institutions offered academic or service credit to students in exchange for their time.

### **Advisor Training**

Five of the twelve deans noted formal training programs for faculty/staff advisors. Newark FAS has an annual meeting in May and regular meetings just before the telephone registration system opens each semester to update advisors on any changes since the previous semester, as well as several other staff development workshops. Livingston College has an annual three-day training session for advisors of first-year students and a special one-day training program for peer advisors. The College of Nursing has an annual three-hour training session. Rutgers College has an annual training session in August for members of its General Advisory Board, and Cook College has an annual training program every spring. Additionally, Douglass College formally

trains its peer mentors, and the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy has training opportunities available upon request.

Student focus group participants noted that the range of knowledge and service advisors provide to their students varied greatly from program to program and college to college, and suggested regular, consistent training to alleviate such wide variation.

Highlights from the web search indicate a variety of approaches. The following are particularly interesting examples:

On-line web site ready-reference tools and to-do lists for advisors: Kalamazoo College, MI. Suggestions include learning activities for students, what-to-expect during each quarter, necessary task lists, how to use the advising portfolio, and expectations for students.

On-line system resource to faculty advisors: Penn State. The system is designed to assist advisors in understanding the complex institutional policies, procedures, and curricula. This expert based, empirically-grounded advising system is designed to supplement student-advisor relationships and engage students and faculty in interactive inquiry for educational planning. The University's Center for Excellence in Academic Advising also provides an on-line advising handbook (advising resources available and detail on roles, responsibilities, policies, and resources).

In-person training workshop: Arizona State University. The University provides four-hour training workshops early in the spring semester. The web site provides information on communication competencies (1. active listening: listening for total meaning, paying attention to verbal and nonverbal cues, responding to feelings, and feedback/testing for understanding; and 2. listening techniques: clarification, paraphrasing, and reflection), and guidelines for responding with empathy, a code of ethics specific to advisors, and a code of conduct for use in decision-making by advisors when dealing with students.

Peer Advisor Training: Approximately 25 of the institutions researched offered continuing faculty advisor training and development on how to use new system(s), criteria, tools, handbook, and advising expectations. Some also offered new faculty and faculty advisors more intense training over a longer period of time. Training for undergraduate/peer advisors who assist students in academic planning specific to their own department was also available. Independent training sessions are frequently conducted by department chairs and a representative from the college's main academic advising office. Undergraduate/peer advisors enroll in teaching assistant classes and participate in an interactive semester-long seminar on student advising.

Resident Assistants: Evergreen University and Indiana University, plus others. Resident assistants act as advisors with training sessions conducted by professional staff and trained students.

Regional Conferences for Faculty Advisors: University of South Carolina Conference most widely cited.

In-house Conferences for Faculty Advisors: Indiana University hosted first annual conference in 1999.

On Campus Major Advising Clearinghouse/Resource Center:

- National Resource Center for the Freshmen-Year Experience and Students in Transition at University of South Carolina.
- National Clearinghouse for Academic Advising, Ohio State University and Kentucky State University (executive headquarters).

**Advisor Compensation**

Survey responses from the deans indicated that Newark FAS is the only college that provides its faculty and staff advisors with a yearly stipend (\$1700). Until 1991, Rutgers College also provided monetary compensation to its advisors through the Office of the Provost. Funding was discontinued. Almost all the colleges consider advising to be one of their main administration's key responsibilities and, thus, do not provide funding for them. Many consider advising to be a professional duty of their faculty. However, most colleges noted difficulty in recruiting volunteers to advise, because the faculty and staff are not recognized or compensated in any form greater than personal satisfaction and gratitude for service. At New Brunswick FAS, some departments with large numbers of majors provide release time for advisors. No other college reported providing release time. At the School of Engineering, some tutors are paid hourly from the limited Office of Special Programs' funds. The Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy and Douglass College do not compensate student advisors.

Most schools within the web search identified advisor compensation as an area in which improvements could be made. Responses to the challenge include a combination of monetary compensation, creative use of academic and service credit, and grants. Some highlights include:

Small stipend for paid student positions: University of Wisconsin.

Orientation leaders-\$7.25/hour, orientation assistants (clerical support) for program-\$6.50/hour, orientation planners-\$9/hour.

Service-Learning/Academic Credit:

Several institutions offered academic or service credit to students in exchange for their time.

Outstanding Advisor Award at Eastern Oregon University:

Presented at Fall Convocation each year.

Excellence in Faculty Advising Award: Coffeyville Community College, Kansas.

Six advisors each year are awarded \$1,000 grant to attend a summer workshop to become a "Master Advisor." Advisors then return to assist with student orientation, teach one section of college orientation, mentor 10 at-risk students, and participate in an early warning academic advising system via e-mail for those students who are at risk of failing.

Masters of Education and Graduate Advising Programs: Many colleges recruit from their pool of masters students studying relevant subject matter, who have expressed and demonstrated a genuine interest in teaching and student development.

Volunteers: Many universities rely on volunteers to assist in various phases of the advising process. Sometimes volunteers are rewarded with special privileges such as early registration or a "thank you" dinner reception. Students are encouraged to participate to become more active in the university community and to build their own personal skills repertoire.

## 6. Use of Technology in the Advising Process

### Current Uses of Technology

Based on the deans' questionnaire responses, it appears that technology is not being utilized to its fullest as an advising tool—either as a complement to or substitute for human resources. Students and administrators do make use of technology for course selection and registration purposes, including the monitoring of seat availability and student interest. E-mail responses to personal advising questions, information from listservs, extensive use of individual college home pages, and registration are the most frequently used applications. In addition, Douglass College and the School of Engineering use technology to communicate with students in their first-year seminars, share career counseling resources, and, to a limited extent, share information stored in electronic databases. The *ArtSys* articulation system and the ability to maintain and share student-advising histories electronically were the most frequently mentioned future technology enhancements.

### Future Enhancements

Technology enhancements were seen as critical to improved advising. However, a better balance between the use of technology and the equally critical face-to-face interaction between a student and his/her advisor was also noted. Often the advisor, who understands the big picture, can offer the student new options and answers to questions that the student does not think to ask. These interactions allow the advisor to give a few minutes of personal attention to a student, which is particularly necessary in a system as large as Rutgers where students commonly perceive that they are only a number.

A few college-specific enhancements designed to achieve this balance are already underway, while others have yet to be formally addressed. For example:

- Livingston College, with assistance from the Teaching Excellence Center, is developing an electronic version of the Academic Advising Center.<sup>10</sup>
- The Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy is developing an on-line database to document all student-advisor interactions.
- Douglass College is making significant improvements to its homepage for use as an advising tool, and is expanding its use of broadcast e-mail technology.
- The *ArtSys* system is being used by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Newark and Camden to capture equivalent courses from external schools.

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<sup>10</sup>*Peer Advisors receive special training organized by the Director of the Academic Information Center and two other academic deans. Each peer advisor also receives a "Livingston College Academic Advising Manual" as a reference guide. Faculty and staff advisors assigned to first-year students receive three days of training from the Academic Dean for first-year students and two other academic deans. A newly formed Committee on Advising is charged with providing guidelines, designing training, and developing a formal process of evaluation for all advising.*

Opportunities for addressing some of the stated, but currently unmet, advising needs on a University-wide basis include:

- Exploring computer-based degree and major-check programs designed to track a student's progress toward the degree, and clear them for graduation, and one that would enable students to compare how completed academic work might apply to different majors. Student management of progress toward the degree was seen as highly desirable. In the absence of such University-wide initiatives, some larger academic programs have developed their own systems.
- Hiring/developing personnel capable of web site management.
- Increasing web-advising capability to include registration processing, transfer credit evaluation, financial aid and scholarship information. Electronic "one-stop-shopping" for undergraduates is envisioned. Using technology to enhance the distribution of information in an attractive format, including the use of flat screen displays in hallways, and information kiosks for visitors and prospective students.
- Providing faculty with access to student records and transcripts on-line, and with the ability to register a student at the time of the advisor appointment.

Information gathered from the web search indicates other institutions are finding ways to address these issues as well.

Web Advising: University of Indiana, Bloomington (IU Care) and University of Maryland (Venus), Penn State (CAAIS).

These are web-based services for faculty, staff, and current and potential students that provide secure access to student records. A student can use the systems to produce an advising report for the current or potential major or specialized program; model how in-progress courses apply to the advising report; and add future courses, grades, and hours.

If enrolled in GradPact (University of Indiana) a student can measure the individual advising report against established benchmarks. The University Maryland and University of Indiana programs are accompanied by a tutorial.

"CSUMentor": Cal State.

High school and transfer students interested in attending any Cal State School can use the "CSUMentor" web site to communicate directly with various academic and administrative departments at any CSU campus via e-mail.

Computer-assisted Advising Program: Brigham Young University.

This computer-assisted advising program monitors and tracks a student's progress from entry through graduation. It provides a detailed evaluation of all graduation requirements for each student according to date of entry, and is similar to the University of Indiana and University of Maryland programs. The system sends an electronic advising report to each student before the drop/add deadline each semester and before the registration deadline of the subsequent semester.

Supplemental E-mail Advising: Washington State University, Tusculum College, University of Indiana, and University of Maryland.

The option is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is used to forward general and department-specific advising questions to a faculty advisor. Some schools have only central offices responding, and some have this service available only in specific departments.

Computerized Academic Alert Notice: Brigham Young University.

Academic notices are sent via e-mail midway through a semester to those students in danger of failing a class.

Mandatory Session with Advisor: Penn State, University of Maryland, Arizona State University, George Washington University and others; approximately 70% of all schools.

An automatic hold on the student record prior to registration forces a session with the advisor. Students are unable to access electronic/telephone registration capabilities until the advisor removes the hold.

## **7. Information Resources**

Student focus group participants offered many positive comments relative to information resources.

- Transfer students had high praise for the learning resource center and math and science centers e-mail updates, and suggested other students be better alerted to these services and receive such updates, though unsolicited.
- International students praised the staff at the Center for International Faculty and Student Services for their advisement and resourcefulness at guiding them to the appropriate resources on campus.
- The RU web site was acknowledged for its helpfulness and 24-hour access.
- Introductory seminar courses were praised for providing broad access to many related fields of interest at once.
- Departmental secretaries scored high in their ability to respond to most student inquiries.

Students acknowledged the variety of tools available, but noted difficulty in knowing how to gain access to or obtain knowledge of those tools. They suggested:

- Creating easy to follow guides, bus schedules with approximate travel times to help with course selection, information on where to find various kinds of assistance (career, testing, tutoring, facilities, etc.) and FAQ guides for each college in print and on the web.
- Providing a four-year plan upon entering college the first year (or a shorter plan for transfers) that clearly identifies course options. Plans should be available by major and for undeclared students as well. An interactive on-line plan, which helps students view the wide variety of options available to them and allows for individuality in course selection would be the ideal. Transfer students, in particular, seemed to have great difficulty developing an academic plan, which allows them to graduate in 4-5 years from their original start date.

- Providing all students with basic advising information.
- Finding ways to allow students to explore more general requirements before selecting a major, to learn more about selected majors before declaring, and to learn more about the variety of academic fields taught within the University.
- Having students or instructors from each major speak at the various student orientations.
- Using the web to provide information about the career possibilities of the various majors, the intensity of the academic programs, and program expectations to better help them decide on an appropriate major.
- Better promotion of service-learning programs across the University.
- Formally defining a set of mutual expectations for advising between the University and its students.
- Providing information on which courses from outside institutions can be credited to their program.
- The establishment of formal peer-advising programs across the university.

Highlights from the web search indicate a variety of approaches to these issues in use at other institutions:

Midnight Advising: Evergreen University, Washington State.

Within their residence halls, students have access to after-hour advising including contact information, catalog updates, syllabi, schedules, faculty information, workshops, and academic skills support.

GradPact: University of Indiana, Bloomington.

First-year students enrolling on this campus are eligible to sign up for a program that can help them graduate within four years or eight full semesters. The plan is guaranteed and, if followed correctly, should lead to graduation in four years. If it does not, the fifth year is free. For each of 124 undergraduate majors a "curricular map" has been drawn that shows paths for meeting all the requirements on time. The maps also include "benchmarks," or specific goals to meet by specific times to stay on track toward degree. This plan was initiated with the full support of the university's president.

Transfer Registration Policy: University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The University of Wisconsin system policy enables transfer students from system campuses to access course registration at the same time as their classmates. UW System transfers who intend to enroll in January receive information about making an appointment with an advisor in the school/college in late November/early December for advising and registration for classes. All those who have not met with an advisor by the time of winter orientation in mid-January can do so at that time.

Transfer Center: Washington State University.

The Center provides:

- Preliminary academic advising for students seeking admission to Washington State University.
- A clearly identified "point of contact" upon arrival.
- Assistance with developing academic goals and plans, and evaluation of progress towards these goals.
- Assistance with academic major search and selection for undecided transfers (in conjunction with career services).
- Outreach workshops, both on and off campus, on academic regulations and university procedures, advising, general university requirements, learning, and other academic strategies.
- Facilitation of effective and timely advising of transfer students through collaboration with other WSU units, community colleges and four-year institutions.
- Facilitation of the development of articulation agreements between WSU colleges and departments and community colleges.

On-line Transfer Credit Course Articulation: States of California, Washington, Alabama, and Texas provide transfer credit course information (see below).

ASSIST (Articulation System Stimulating Inter-institutional Student Transfer): Statewide Student Transfer Information for California.

The program assumes that students who have access to more complete, accurate information, make more informed decisions. The system provides answers to:

- How will I get university credit for courses I've taken at the community college?
- How will the courses I've taken be applied to university requirements?
- How can I fulfill my lower-division GE requirements before I transfer?

Students select an institution and academic year and courses will be matched between the community college or other California academic institution with any four-year California institution of education.

Cougar TRACS (Washington State University Transfer Credit System):

This system provides help in the planning transfer of credits to Washington State University. Students are able to view requirements from any degree program at WSU and enter transfer coursework from other schools. A custom report shows how credits earned outside WSU will apply to a selected degree. Students may maintain records over a period of time and make addendum if planning to transfer at a later date. They are also able to obtain a transfer course equivalencies list for basic reference information that matches many two-year college courses from around the country with WSU.

AGSC Stars (State of Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee):

The system hosts approved transfer guides, course listings, requirements, and guidelines and links to home pages, transfer pages, and contacts. It is designed to account for transfer of in-state credits only. Created in 1994 by act of the legislature, this agreement guarantees the transferability of coursework listed among in-state institutions of higher education. The agreement includes a statewide first and second year-level general studies curriculum to be taken at all public colleges and universities in the state, and a statewide articulation agreement for the transfer of credit among all public institutions of higher education in the state. This means that students can now obtain an AGSC-approved Transfer Guide via the STARS Internet System. The Transfer Guide guarantees the transfer of credit for courses listed on the guide.

TCCN (Texas Common Course Numbering System):

This is a voluntary cooperative effort among Texas community colleges and universities to facilitate transfer of first and second year general-level coursework. It provides a shared, uniform set of course designations for students and advisors to use in determining course equivalency and degree applicability of transfer credit on a statewide basis. One hundred ten institutions currently participate. It hosts a transfer guide that recommends specific common courses to ensure degree applicability and transfer of credit hosted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and a history of the development of the TCCN system.

On-line Advising Handbook/Toolkits: The University of Wisconsin, Washington State, Western Kentucky University all make use of these tools.

Extensive On-line Databases of Information for First-Year and Transfer Advising Information: The University of South Carolina, University of Maryland, Penn State, University of Indiana, Bloomington, Washington State University, Arizona State University, Evergreen State College and Montclair State University are able to provide students with information via these repositories.

## **8. Advising Program Evaluation and Improvements**

While noted by the deans as being critically important to the success of advising, most advising programs at Rutgers do not currently have formal, consistent ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. The web search included a few examples of approaches taken at other institutions that may be of interest.

Formal Student Evaluation of Faculty: Eastern Oregon University.

The formal review becomes part of a faculty's personnel teaching portfolio. It is based on:

1) accessibility to students, 2) amount of time spent in advising students, 3) familiarity with requirements of various university programs, 4) ability to relate successfully to a wide variety of students, and 5) knowledge of resources available for meeting student needs and keeping adequate records.

Academic Advisor Checklist:

Many schools list behaviors and roles associated with being a good academic advisor on the web or in the student handbook for purposes of student reference and faculty learning and self-evaluation.

Exploratory Committee Review: Indiana University, Bloomington.

Indiana University Advisors' Council has set up a committee to explore internal advising issues.

## **9. Changes Colleges Would Make to Improve Their Programs**

Each college has its own wish list based on its current advising processes and unique student populations. Collaboration and sharing of these ideas may create mutual benefit for more than one college, and may be a key to leveraging limited resources. Many of the colleges noted the need for support at the university level to implement the desired improvements. Some of the most frequently named improvements include:

Center for Organizational Development and Leadership  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Pursuing Excellence in the Undergraduate Student Experience  
Final Report  
April 29, 2002

- Better physical accommodations that are more spacious and attractive
- Networked computing resources for advisors (one networked computer per advisor was a frequently stated need)
- Increased human resources (more full- and part-time advisors) and training (in advising and computing capacities)
- Inclusion of advising in faculty performance appraisals
- Some form of compensation for dedicated faculty/staff advisors whether in the form of financial reward, release time, public recognition, or promotion

## APPENDIX A – Letter to Deans

Dear Dean \_\_\_\_\_:

Undergraduate academic advising serves an important function in our efforts to help students succeed academically and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful career. Over the past few years, students, faculty and professional staff have raised the issue of the effectiveness of our current advising process, indicating that there is potential for substantial improvement. However, University-wide, we do not have a complete picture of the manner in which advising occurs. As with many issues at Rutgers, there are differences in organization, personnel, process, and concept among the colleges and schools. If we are to enhance this area, it is essential that we have accurate information about the current state of the advising process for each of the academic units.

A small committee has been working with me to begin to assess the academic advising process at Rutgers, to make recommendations concerning how it can be enhanced, and to support your efforts at improving this area. Our initial assessment effort will focus on advising for first-year and transfer students in two phases of their Rutgers experience: a) from the point they indicate their intention to enroll at the University to the first day of classes; and b) during their first year of attendance.

Our assessment will include a questionnaire for you to complete, a follow-up interview with you, and student focus groups. Enclosed find the advising questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire to me by February 15. You will be contacted later in Spring 2000 for a follow-up interview. A member of the Quality and Communication Improvement Office (QCI) [Center for Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL)] staff will be organizing and conducting student focus groups.

We hope that our assessment of the academic advising process at Rutgers will provide us with many examples of “best practices” that can be considered for adoption by multiple units. We are also interested in finding out what isn’t working for you and your students and in developing creative, innovative, effective ways of dealing with these issues. Thank you in advance for your willingness to collaborate on this important project. Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Susan G. Forman

Enclosure

## APPENDIX B – Deans’ Advising Survey

*Thank you for taking time to provide us with information on your advising program(s) for first-year and transfer students during the following two phases: a) from intention to enroll to the first day of classes; and b) during the first year of attendance.*

***Please provide as much detail as possible in your response, as well as samples of materials provided to students and/or advisors.***

1. What are the objectives of your first-year and transfer advising program(s)? (Please distinguish between those for first-year, first-time students and transfers to Rutgers.)
2. Which areas do your advising process address? (course selection, helping students clarify values and goals, exploring educational and career options, links to the broader RU community for services, financial aid, etc.)
3. Describe the major programs and activities of your advising program(s) for first-year and transfer students. (Who is responsible, timing, information provided, process, etc.?)
4. How do you recruit your advisors? (Who are they? Do they receive extra compensation? etc.)
5. Do you have a formal training/professional development program for advisors? Please describe. (Include information related to training materials provided, extent of training, timing, who provides the training, etc.)
6. Do you have a formal evaluation process for your advising program? Please describe and attach any pertinent evaluation instruments.
7. Is technology used as part of the advising process? If so, please describe. In what ways would you like to increase your use of technology to enhance your advising program(s)?
8. Please describe the major strengths and weaknesses of the current advising program(s).
9. What changes would you make to improve your program(s)?

## APPENDIX C – Focus Group Selection Methodology

One hundred participant invitations were mailed via campus or internal mail for each group between February 29 and March 8, 2000. Each participant received his/her invitation no less than 18 days and up to six weeks prior to the focus group event. The initial response rate for those who accepted was approximately 3%. A reminder notice was sent to participants from the first three groups via e-mail. This resulted in an increase of only two participants per group. Because of the low response rate, a second group of an additional 300-400 participants were sent invitations via e-mail two weeks prior to the actual focus sessions. This increased confirmations by about three or four people per group. The e-mail reminders, titled "We haven't heard from you," and the second wave of invitations yielded a large influx of responses from people who were unable to attend, unlike the first set of invitations. Random phone calls and e-mail responses from those who could not attend revealed that most people simply had class conflicts or personal obligations at the times selected, even though the groups were scheduled at night, around regular meetings of student organizations. Several students commented that the potential for "winning" a \$250 gift certificate to the computer store was not a significant motivator.

Many students who responded noted that they did not regularly use their Rutgers accounts. (Almost 30% of all responses were received from Hotmail, Yahoo, AOL, and work accounts.) This leads us to believe that our original concern about "unconnected" students may have been misguided in part. Those Rutgers University students, who do not have accounts listed with the Registrar, may not be "unconnected." Rather, they merely may be uninterested in a second or third e-mail account, and find no need to establish an official University e-mail address. Given this, the University may want to make an effort to solicit these alternative addresses to ensure that these students are assured of receiving the same information as their peers.

Participants appeared to prefer to respond by e-mail more than via telephone. Only four phone RSVPs were received of the 77 total acceptances. Furthermore, e-mail yielded a faster response with only a fraction of the manpower required. It allowed for easy, non-time restricted, paperless communication with interested students who were accepting the invitations, confirming their places in the group, or seeking more information. However, close to 350 of the 3600 e-mail invites (or about 10%) were returned for improper addresses or system error. This is a high rate and would seem to warrant further investigation.

Though the actual number of participants was low in comparison to the desired participation level, facilitators agreed that the amount and kind of information was quite useful. Participants exhibited either extremely strong support or extremely high dissatisfaction with their school's advising programs. They were, for the most part, very eager to share and quite articulate.



## APPENDIX D – Focus Group Advising Survey

### FOCUS GROUP ADVISING SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to complete the brief survey below. You may provide additional comments on the reverse side.

**SECTION I.** The following questions relate to an advising program your school may have offered to new students either before you arrived on campus or during the first few weeks of the fall, 1999 semester.

1. Does your school offer such a program?  
Please circle one response.

Yes  
No →  
Don't Know →

If your school does not offer such a program or you don't know if they do, please go to Section II.

2. If your school offers an advising program, did you participate in group advising sessions sponsored by your school?  
Please circle one response.

Yes  
No

3. How did you learn about the advising program at your school?

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4. List up to three things you found most helpful about your school's advising program for new students.

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5. List up to three things you found least helpful.

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6. If you could change one thing about the advising program, what would it be?

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**SECTION II.** The following questions are related to your interactions with your advisor.

1. Have you met with an advisor?  
Please circle one response.

Yes  
No  
Don't Have an advisor →

If you do not have an advisor, please go to section three on the back of this page.

2. How many times did you meet with your advisor in the fall, 1999 semester?  
\_\_\_\_\_ times

3. List up to three things you found most helpful during the meeting(s) with your advisor.

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4. List up to three things you found least helpful.

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5. If you could change one thing about the session(s) you had with your advisor, what would it be?

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**SECTION III. The following questions are related to your background.**

1. How did you hear about this focus group?  
*Please circle one response.*

**Email only**  
**Letter only**  
**Both email and letter**  
**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your gender?  
*Please circle one response.*

**Male**  
**Female**

3. What is your registration unit?

---

4. Which of the following were you  
in the fall, 1999 semester?  
*Please circle one response.*

**First year student**  
**Transfer student**

5. **If you are a transfer student:**

Please list any colleges or universities you know of with advising programs that meet student needs well.

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**SECTION IV. Please use the space below for any additional comments you may have.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION!**

**APPENDIX E – Focus Group Attendance and Response Rate**  
**(See attached Excel Chart)**

## APPENDIX F – Focus Group Survey Demographics

Thirty participants attended five (of six) planned focus sessions. Zero attendees were present at the session planned for April 6, 2000.

*Q1.1 Does your school offer such a program [advising program]?*

Yes: 28

No: 0

Don't Know: 2

*Q1.2 If your school offers an advising program, did you participate in group advising sessions sponsored by your school?*

Yes: 16

No: 13

No Response: 1

*Q 2.1 Have you met with an advisor?*

Yes: 26

No: 4

*Q2.2 How many times did you meet with your advisor in the Fall 1999 semester?*

The mean number of visits per student was 2.2.

The median number of visits per student was 1.5.

The range number of visits was 0 - 10.

*Q3.1 How did you hear about the focus group?*

17 students were contacted via e-mail only

4 students were contacted via letter only

8 students were contacted via e-mail and letter

1 student did not respond

*Q3.2 What is your gender?*

12 males and 18 females attended the sessions.

*Q3.3 What is your registration unit? and Q3.4 Which of the following were you enrolled in for the Fall 1999 semester, First-year (FY) or Transfer (TR)? [School Code in ( )]*

**First-Year Students (11)**

1 MGSA

5 ENGIN

2 NURS

2 NCAS

1 SCHOOL UNKNOWN

**Transfer Students (17)**

3 UCNB

2 UC NCAS

2 RUTGERS COLL

3 NCAS

1 LIVING COLL

6 CAMDEN

## APPENDIX G – Web-based Benchmarking Search

1. Alabama (nonspecific)
2. Arizona State University
3. Boston University
4. Brigham Young University
5. California State Universities (nonspecific)
6. Coffeyville Community College, KS
7. Columbus State University, GA
8. Cottey College
9. Eastern Oregon University
10. Eastern New Mexico
11. Evergreen State College, WA
12. Fullerton College, California
13. George Washington University
14. Indiana State University - Bloomington
15. Kalamazoo College, MI
16. Kean University
17. Kentucky State University
18. Long Island University
19. Montclair State University
20. Northern Illinois University
21. Penn State, College Park
22. Penn State, Behrend
23. Ohio State University
24. Siena College
25. Tusculum College
26. Texas (nonspecific)
27. University of California - Davis
28. University of Maryland
29. University of Nebraska - Kearney
30. University of New Haven
31. University of Oregon
32. University of Rhode Island
33. University of South Carolina
34. University of Wisconsin -Madison
35. University of Montana - Missoula
36. Washington State University
37. William Paterson
38. William Penn College
39. Youngstown State University



## APPENDIX H – Benchmarking Findings

The following summary includes advising information gathered from over 35 university web sites. The information was gathered by conducting a general search using keywords (e.g. advising, orientation, transfer, freshman). *Italics throughout this section note the most frequently recurring themes or ideas.* The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of institutions noting the same or similar response. Specifics about innovative or popular programs are recorded whenever information is available. (See Appendix G for a list of institutions included in the web search). This is a cumulative list of the information found through the study. Selected items have been repeated within the body of the document where applicable.

### A. Objectives of First-Year Advising Programs

- a) Initial academic advising to assist in making *routine course choices* and later emphasis shifts to counsel concerning attainment of post-baccalaureate objectives. (15)
- b) Help students realize *maximum educational benefits*. (ALL)
- c) Help students *define and develop realistic goals*, to perceive their needs accurately, and to *match these needs to appropriate institutional resources*. (15)
- d) Conduct advising in the context of a *caring and trusting relationship* for maximum success. (10)
- e) Focus on *university resources*, creative learning, and service learning and commitment to a particular field of study. (7)
- f) Match resources and services that are appropriate in scope, depth, and intensity to the needs of the individual student. (5)
- g) Recognize that the relationship between the academic advisor and student is an important determinant in the success of the advising process. (5)
- h) Provide new and transitional students with academic home and high-quality advising; general advising, educational planning and referral. (5)
- i) Provide a university-wide academic advising system and information network. (5)
- j) Provide *comprehensive testing, educational planning*, and advising programs for new students. (ALL)
- k) Promote the use of technology to enhance the advising programs and services. (5)
- l) *Meet the advising needs of the university or college's diverse student population*. (15)
- m) Help students learn to better *understand selves*, and to meet *special educational needs* and aspirations through an effective relationship with their advisors. (7)
- n) *Developmental advising* as a mutual and integral part of the educational experience: This involves *setting goals together*, which enable students to understand educational and career options. Advising is an important vehicle for helping students achieve educational and personal goals through the use of campus and community resources. (7)
- o) Provide educational planning and *advising resources in support of students' academic objectives*. (10)
- p) Offers *general education advising through Dean's offices* and career/major-specific advising through Advising Services. (8)
- q) Provide *quality advising* to all students. (25)
- r) Students, faculty, and staff work as a partnership for maximum benefit. (20)
- s) *Ensure timely and accurate advising* to students and their majors (declared or undeclared). (20)

- t) Assist in assessing educational goals, developing programs of study, and *understanding rules, procedures, and curriculum requirements*. (ALL)

**B. Advising Models:** (*Very few schools identified a central model applicable to all advising practices with students*). Those that did, include:

**1. Columbus State University, Georgia**

Five-Step Advising Model by Terry O'Banion (1972)

Note: This model is now generally recognized as the origin of the developmental advising, student-centered approach to academic advising. Quality of advising is greatly bolstered by devoting ample time to first two steps (a and b) which will help facilitate the rest of the steps (c, d, and e).

- √ Exploration and confirmation of life goals and values.
- √ Exploration and confirmation of career goals.
- √ Selection of a major or program of study to achieve life, career, and educational goals.
- √ Selection of courses in any given term.
- √ Scheduling of courses.

**2. Evergreen University, Washington**

The Five Foci of Advising and Learning

- √ Interdisciplinary study.
- √ Personal engagement in learning.
- √ Collaborative/cooperative learning.
- √ Linking theory with practice.
- √ Learning across significant differences.

**3. Penn State University, Pennsylvania**

Components of Academic Advising

- √ Conveying the purposes of the university.
- √ Information giving.
- √ Short-range planning.
- √ Long-range planning.
- √ Student referral.

**4. Arizona State University, Arizona**

Each college chooses to follow an advising model that is indicative of the general organization of advising within the college, but specific to its individual mission. University-wide components that guide the process:

- √ University-wide advisement through Cross-College Advising Services for New and Transfer Students.
- √ Centralized Advising Model - Academic advisement is provided by a professional advisor to all students. It is supplemented by individualized academic mentoring in subordinate departments.

- √ Departmental Academic Advising - Advisors within the departments conduct academic advising.
- √ College-level advisors do special advisement for particular categories of students in one of four ways:
  - One, two, or multiple faculties are assigned individual duties.
  - Graduate students have assigned advising duties.
  - Part-time or full-time employees are hired specifically to advise students.
  - Combination of any or all of the above methods.
- √ Multiple advisors for specific population. Academic advising for students pursuing concurrent degrees in different colleges and for University honors college students and student athletes who require coordination between multiple "primary" advising units.
- √ Students who intend to matriculate in law, medical, or health professional schools will utilize one of the above methods at the college or university level in addition to pre-professional advisors at the college level.

## 5. Washington State University, Washington

### Transfer Advising Model

*Philosophy: Advisors should recognize that the process is an entirely different experience for transfer students than for first-year students. Therefore, emphasis is given to:*

1. Viewing advising relationships as key to success.
2. Displaying concern and interest, not just availability.
3. Orienting students to college as well as to advise them.
4. Collaborating with sending or receiving institution.
5. Analyzing transfer credits as soon as possible.
6. Helping students to find the resources they need to remain in school.

## C. Topics/Areas Included in Advising Process

### 1. Roles and Responsibilities of Advisors

- √ Course Selection
  - *Assist in selection of routine and department-specific class registration and development of academic program in connection with graduation requirements.*
  - *Approve all designated educational transactions (registration schedule, change of major, graduation requirements).*
  - *Answer general questions about college curriculum.*
- √ Helping Students Clarify Values and Goals
  - *Encourage students to explore aspects of their personal, intellectual, and emotional growth.*
  - *Assist in developing and defining realistic educational and career goals.*
  - *Assist in planning a program consistent with student abilities and interests.*
- √ Exploring Educational and Career Options
  - *Increase student satisfaction with the educational process.*

- *Assist in developing and defining realistic educational and career goals (also in "B" above).*
  - *Assist in monitoring and evaluating students' educational process.*
  - *Discuss linkages and relationships between instructional program and occupational career.*
  - *Identify career opportunities (though an equal number refer to Career Services).*
- √ Links to Broader University/Community Services
- *Refer students to other sources on campus when appropriate (financial aid, dining services, etc.).*
  - *Integrate the institution's many resources to meet special education needs and aspirations.*
  - *Help students to think beyond the classroom for learning experiences (internships, research, community, etc).*
  - *Consultation on problems students may experience.*
- √ Financial Aid
- *Refer students to other sources on campus when appropriate (financial aid, dining services, etc.).*
  - *Financial aid advising (includes how to work with financial aid personnel, advice on searching for funding, and understanding your financial aid package).*
  - *Roles and responsibilities of advisors*
- √ Administrative Policies/Requirements
- *Designate and post hours available.*
  - *Maintain advising record of each student (about half through a central or departmental office).*
  - *Interpret and provide rationale for instructional policies, procedures, and requirements.*
- √ Other Student Development
- *Encourage students to find ways to gain experience in "weaker" dimensions or skills.*
  - *Enable students to build on their successes as they move toward completion of their undergraduate career.*
  - *Making student responsible for own course of action.*

## **2. General Roles and Responsibilities of Students**

- √ Advising Sessions
- *Meet with advisor one time each semester or more as necessary, particularly for registration approval (about 75%).*
  - *Schedule an appointment with career counselor if need assistance/come in whenever one has questions (particularly about dropping classes).*
  - *Prepare for session in advance and bring appropriate materials. (Review catalogs and schedule book and have tentative schedule prepared.)*
  - *Follow through with actions identified during advising session.*
- √ Administrative/Policy Requirements
- *Evaluate the advising system.*

- *Be aware of major and GE graduation requirements.*
- *Adhere to institutional policies, procedures, deadlines, and requirements.*

√ Student Accountabilities

- *Accept final responsibility for all decisions.*
- *Monitor own academic progress.*
- Students maintain own academic records including copies of original transcripts/report cards and evaluation worksheets on paper and/or disk and are required to bring it to advising sessions. Most schools suggest that students have copies of own records in addition to institution's copy.

## **D. Major Advising Programs and Activities**

Highlights for First-year and Transfer Students

### **1. Evergreen University, Washington**

- √ Midnight Advising: Students have access to after hour advising including contact information, catalog updates, syllabi, schedules, faculty info, workshops, and academic skills support in their residence halls.
- √ Late afternoon and evening advising offered in dormitories by trained advisors and Resident Assistants: Evergreen and Indiana University (trained advisors), plus many schools utilize resident assistants for this purpose as well. Conducted by professional staff and trained students. Also includes evening and late night general services as listed above.

### **2. University Indiana, Bloomington**

- √ GradPact: First-year students enrolling on this campus are eligible to sign up for a program that can help them graduate within four years or eight full semesters. It is a guaranteed plan. If it does not lead to graduation in four years and it is followed correctly, the fifth year is free. For each of 124 undergraduate majors a "curricular map" has been drawn that shows paths for meeting all the requirements on time. The maps also include "benchmarks," or specific goals to meet by specific times to stay on track toward degree. This plan was initiated with the full support of the University's president.

### **3. Arizona State University, Arizona**

- √ Orientation Week Policy Statement for Faculty: "All faculty, department chairs, and deans are expected to be present for duty on campus during orientation week, one week preceding the beginning of fall and spring semester instruction. During orientation week, freshmen, transfer, and continuing students who have not participated in early registration meet with their academic advisors and plan their programs."
- √ Out-of-state Orientation Program: Five-six hour program available at three out-of-state locations - Newark FAS, NJ, Chicago, O'Hare, and Los Angeles Airport area. Covers same material as on-campus advising services workshops and as much as possible from the summer orientation program. Advisors are sent to different sites to assist with registration and answer questions concerning admissions, financial aid, registrar's office, and so on.

#### 4. **Washington State University, Washington**

- √ Future Cougar Day: A first look at college for younger high school students and their families. Includes cheering the Cougars at the WSU vs. University of Arizona football game; academic learning fair; campus tour, including residence halls; food, music, fun, and activities; meet WSU students and faculty; and explore student clubs and organizations.
- √ Transfer Center: Offers the following services: Preliminary academic advising for transfer students seeking admission to Washington State University. Provides incoming transfer students a clearly identified "point of contact" upon arrival at Washington State University. Assists transfers in developing academic goals and plans and realistically evaluates progress towards these goals. Works with career services to assist undecided transfers with academic major search and selection. Conducts outreach workshops on academic regulations and University procedures, advising, general University requirements, learning, and other academic strategies, both on and off campus. Works with other WSU units, community colleges, and four-year institutions to facilitate effective and timely advising of transfer students. Facilitates the development of articulation agreements between WSU colleges and departments and community colleges.

#### 5. **University of Wisconsin, Madison**

- √ Parent and Student Connection Projects: Telephone surveys conducted by student orientation leaders each year. Students contacted in the fall and parents are contacted in the spring to create a personal connection, allows participants to ask questions and express opinions, and to gather information that helps UW-Madison provide better services.

#### 6. **Montclair State University, New Jersey**

- √ Freshman Connection: Each first-year student is assigned a counselor who will mentor him or her through his/her first-year and then some until they declare a major (after the first-year). *Minimum advising requirement of twice a semester.*

#### 7. **Montclair State University, University of Maryland, University of Indiana, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Arizona State University**

- √ Freshman Learning Communities: A group of approximately 20 students who share enrollment in several classes. Provide academic and social advantages to first-years. Classes kept small to allow students to get to know one another, form study groups, and pursue academic excellence. Classes are sometimes grouped around themes - politics, science, language, culture, English, etc., and other times are just a selection from each of the general education requirements of the school.

#### 8. **FYE – Freshmen-Year Experience**

- √ Approximately 70% of colleges and universities currently offer a first-year seminar program according to *New York Times* article on October 15, 1999. One to three credit semester-long class for first-years (including transfers) focusing on academic success, personal development, technology on campus, campus involvement, campus resources and how to use them, residential life, and future/career planning. Some universities group students by declared or intended major and try to place faculty or advisor from field as class instructor/facilitator. Sample schools include Montclair State University, University of South Carolina, Long Island University, University of New Haven, Kean

University, Ithaca, Air Force Academy, University of Maryland, George Washington University, University of Rhode Island, Blackburn College, Eastern New Mexico University, Northern Illinois University, William Penn College, Cottey College. *Note: Arizona State University and South Carolina offer this class to transfers also in a modified format.*

#### **9. University of Wisconsin, Madison**

- √ Transfer Registration Policy: This system policy enables transfer students from system campuses to access course registration at same time as their classmates. UW System transfers who intend to enroll in January 2000 will receive information about making an appointment with an advisor in the school/college in late November/early December for advising and registration for classes. All those that have not met with an advisor by the time of winter orientation (January 19/20) can do so at that time.

#### **10. Highlights of General Program Guidelines Noted by Various Schools**

- √ Mandatory one-on-one advising prior to registration one time each semester for first-year students and transfers to set educational goals, ensure requirements being met, learn student's aspirations, make references to resources on campus and in community. Assist in trying to set goals consistent with student's interests and talents. Students welcome to make other appointments as needed.
- √ Students assigned faculty advisor in department related to intended major or in the department of general studies/main undergraduate advising office until a major is declared.
- √ Appointment hours for faculty and central advising posted at all times - on door and/or on web.
- √ Academic files for each student maintained with transcripts, SAT score, and current class schedule and activities used by advisors to familiarize self with students.
- √ Students maintain copy of own academic records, come prepared to session by previewing course schedule and catalog and preparing a preliminary schedule.
- √ Advising handbook for advisors and students prepared by college advising center.
- √ Conduct first-year testing, counseling, and advising program for all new and transferring students.
- √ Group orientation to registration process, some group advising (20% of schools) at orientation, most schools (80%) do this one on one with first-year students usually held at new student orientation in summer or the week before classes begin.
- √ Peer advising program trains juniors and seniors in each department to advise and mentor students in course planning, internships, research opportunities, and making campus referrals in addition to faculty advising. Students work through individual departments or central advising office. Professional staff advising as needed supplements peer-to-peer/student-to-student advising. Often peers can better relate to bureaucratic struggles and confusion of students because they may have recently been in the same position

- themselves. Also, students can be more flexible in arranging late night and weekend advising hours. In cases where universities are broken down by colleges, students often work with individual college's advising offices to advise first-and-second-year students and transfers who have not declared a particular major or concentration.
- √ FYE Program consists of a series of workshops and services to first-year students as well as an optional University 101 class.
  - √ All faculty, department chairs, and deans are expected to be present for duty on campus during orientation week, one week preceding the beginning of fall and spring semester instruction for advising purposes.
  - √ *Faculty is expected to provide continuous educational counseling for their students throughout the undergraduate years.*
  - √ *New student advising workshops* separate from orientation for students and also sometimes for their parents too. Addresses specific college and/or major, gives time for personal and/or group academic advising, assists in first-time registration for classes, using class schedule, reviews general studies requirements for school, and includes information on one or all of the following: how to get further academic advising, campus tour, campus safety, financial assistance, residential life, dining services, and other services.

## 11. Orientation Dates Noted

- √ Fall Entry - First-year Students
  - **Boston University:** June and July, 2-day orientation.
  - **Montclair State University, NJ:** 1.5 days, June 29-July 20 depending on college enrolled, July 27 and 28 for late admitted students, August 17 and 18 all make-ups.
  - **Washington State University:** 2-day orientation, 9 sessions June 14-15 through July 23-24, and 2-day orientation the week before classes begin for those students who could not attend previous sessions and still need to be advised and to register.
  - **University of Wisconsin, Madison:** In early April entering first-year students who have paid enrollment deposits receive information about how to enroll in orientations that begin in late April.
  - **University of Indiana, Bloomington:** August 22-August 25 (Only for those students who could not attend a previous summer session. Note: Classes begin on August 30.)
  - **Penn State, Behrend:** August 21-August 26.
- √ Fall Entry - Transfer Students
  - **Boston University:** June and July for September, 2-day.
  - **Evergreen University, Washington:** September 8-26.
  - **Montclair State University, NJ:** 1 day, July 8 - July 29 depending on college enrolled, August 19 all make-ups.
  - **Washington State University:** March 24 for September, 1-day.
  - **University of Wisconsin, Madison:** Beginning in May, transfers who have paid enrollment deposits receive information on how to enroll in summer orientation.
  - **University of Indiana, Bloomington:** August 22-25 (Only for those students who could not attend a previous summer session. Note: Classes begin on August 30.)

- √ Spring Entry - Both First-year and Transfer Students
  - **Boston University:** One-day orientation in early January.
  - **Washington State University:** January 5 for January 10 first day.
  - **University of Wisconsin, Madison:** Beginning in mid November invitations are mailed to winter admissions for first-year and transfer students for January 19 or January 20 session. (See University of Wisconsin - transfer policy.)
  
- √ Orientation at Student's Leisure at Fullerton College
  - Developed orientation video for native speakers of English and those who speak English as a second language. Videos are accompanied by orientation handbook and available to students at any time before or after they submit an application. May be used in lieu of or in addition to regular group orientation. Students evaluated new program favorably and retained comparable amounts of information as those students who attended group session.
  
- √ Parent Orientation Program
  - Many Schools (10).

## **E. Advisor Recruitment Tools**

### **1. Eastern Oregon University**

- √ Outstanding Advisor Award: Presented at Fall Convocation each year.

### **2. Coffeyville Community College, Kansas**

- √ Excellence in Faculty Advising Award: Six advisors each year are awarded \$1,000 grant to attend a summer workshop to become a "Master Advisor." Advisors then return to assist with student orientation, teach one section of college orientation, mentor 10 at-risk students, and participate in an early warning academic advising system via e-mail for those students who are at risk of failing.

### **3. University of Wisconsin**

- √ Orientation stipend: orientation leader - \$7.25/hour, orientation assistants (clerical support) for program - \$6.50/hour, orientation planners - \$9/hr.
  
- √ Free Housing +\$1,000/year to student first-year learning community facilitators and/or peer instructors: Students live amongst charges and act as an in-house advisor in exchange for stipend and housing. Meet with residents weekly to discuss their learning community classes and general first-year concerns.

### **4. Other Schools**

- √ Masters of Education and Graduate Advising Programs: Many colleges recruit from their pool of masters' students studying relevant subject matter who have expressed and demonstrated a genuine interest in teaching and student development.
- √ Service-Learning/Academic Credit: Several institutions offered academic or service credit to students in exchange for their time.
- √ Volunteers: Many universities rely on volunteers to assist in various phases of the advising process. Sometimes volunteers are rewarded with special privileges such as early registration or a "thank you" dinner reception. Students are encouraged to

participate to become more active in the university community and to build their own personal skills repertoire.

## **F. Formal Professional Development Programs for Advisors**

### **1. Kalamazoo College, Michigan**

- √ On-line web site offers a ready-reference tool and to-do lists for advisors  
Suggestions on web site include learning activities for students, what-to-expect during each quarter, and necessary task lists. Also exemplifies how to use the advising portfolio and expectations for students.

### **2. Penn State, Pennsylvania**

- √ CAAIS On-line system offers resource to faculty advisor  
To assist advisors in understanding the complex institutional policies, procedures, and curricula. This expert based, empirically grounded advising system should supplement student-advisor relationships and engage students and faculty in interactive inquiry for educational planning. Also available on-line is a total advising handbook from the University's Center for Excellence in Academic Advising. Two-page outline of advising resources available, followed by pages of detail on advising roles, responsibilities, policies, and resources.

### **3. Arizona State University, Arizona**

- √ In-person Training Workshop  
Provides advisors with four-hour training workshops in early spring semester. They also list on their web site a competency list of necessary communication skills including (1) active listening: listening for total meaning, paying attention to verbal and nonverbal cues, responding to feelings, and feedback/testing for understanding; (2) listening techniques: clarification, paraphrase, and reflection. Following these skills are guidelines for responding with empathy, a code of ethics specific to advisors, and code of conduct for use in decision-making by advisors when dealing with students.

### **4. Other Schools**

- √ Staff Development Workshops  
About 1/2 of universities researched offered:
  - Continuing faculty advisor training and development on how to use new system(s), criteria, tools, handbook, and advising expectations.
  - New faculty and faculty advisors more intense training over a longer period of time.
  - Training conducted by Director or Dean of Academic Advising.
  - Workshops
- √ Undergraduate/peer advisor training
  - Undergraduate/peer advisors are trained to assist students in academic planning, specific to their own department. Usually training sessions conducted by department chair and a representative from a college's main academic advising office though not jointly.
  - Undergraduate/peer advisor enrolls in teaching assistant class and participates in interactive semester-long seminar on student advising.

- √ Regional Conferences for Faculty Advisors

University of South Carolina Conference most widely cited.

- √ In-house Conferences for Faculty Advisors  
Indiana University hosted first annual conference this past year (1999).
- √ On Campus Major Advising Clearinghouse/Resource Center  
National Resource Center for the Freshmen-Year Experience and Students in Transition, at University of South Carolina  
National Clearinghouse for Academic Advising, Ohio State University and Kentucky State University (executive headquarters)

## **G. Formal Evaluation Processes**

### **1. Eastern Oregon University**

- √ Formal Student Evaluation of Faculty: Review becomes part of the personnel-teaching portfolio. It is based on:
  - Accessibility to students.
  - Amount of time spent in advising students.
  - Familiarity with requirements of various university programs.
  - Ability to relate successfully to a wide variety of students.
  - Knowledge of resources available for the meeting of students' needs and keeping of adequate records.

### **2. University of South Carolina**

- √ Formal Student Evaluation of Faculty  
Students evaluate all University 101 classes and instructors on likert-scale and also provide subjective responses to open-ended questions.
- √ University Faculty Co-Director Feedback  
In addition to student evaluations, detailed feedback is provided to each instructor from university faculty co-director.

### **3. University of Wisconsin, Madison**

- √ Student Evaluation of Faculty  
Project initiated by Faculty Senate in Fall 1996 and goal is to create a uniform feedback system with input from faculty, students, and staff. Accountability measures were adopted from the university's Board of Regents. Records are averaged for entire program by department and are available at the Wisconsin web site. Individual class or faculty data are not available.

### **4. Indiana University, Bloomington**

- √ Exploratory Committee Review  
Indiana University Advisors' Council set up a committee to explore internal advising issues. It appears to be structured very similarly to ours.

### **5. Other Schools**

- √ Good Academic Advisor Checklist  
Schools list behaviors and roles associated with a good academic advisor on web or in student handbook for students to refer and faculty to self-learn and self-evaluate.

## **H. The Role of Technology in the Advising Process**

### **1. Penn State, University of Maryland, Arizona State, George Washington University and many others; approximately 70% of all schools**

#### √ Electronic hold on student records

An electronic hold is automatically installed in system before registration begins each semester. Student cannot utilize their electronic/telephone registration capabilities until they meet with an advisor for a mandatory one time each semester advising session and advisor enters system to lift "hold" on record after the meeting.

### **2. Washington State, Tusculum College, University of Indiana, and University of Maryland**

#### √ Supplementary e-mail advising

Operational 24 hours a day. Sends general and department-specific advising questions to a faculty advisor. Some schools have only central offices responding and some schools have this service only in specific departments.

### **3. University of Indiana, Bloomington (IU Care), University of Maryland (Venus), Penn State (CAAIS)**

#### √ Web Advising

Web-based service for faculty, staff, and current and potential students that provides secure access to student records. Students can use to produce an advising report for current or different major or specialized program; see how in-progress courses apply to advising report; add future courses, grades, and hours to see how they apply to advising report and if enrolled in GradPact, can see how its benchmarks apply to advising report. Programs from the University of Maryland and Indiana are accompanied by a tutorial for new users.

### **4. Cal State, California**

#### √ Web Advising

High school and transfer students interested in attending any Cal State School can use CSUMentor web site to communicate directly with various academic and administrative departments at any CSU campus via e-mail. (See transfers and technology below.)

### **5. Brigham Young University, Utah**

#### √ Web Advising

BYU's computer-assisted advising program monitors and tracks a student's progress from entry through graduation. It provides a detailed evaluation of all graduation requirements for each student, according to date of entry. It gives similar information to those at Indiana University and University of Maryland (see above) and also generates and sends an advising report to each student before the drop/add deadline of each semester and before the registration deadline of the subsequent semester.

#### √ Computerized Academic Alert Notice

Academic notice is sent via e-mail halfway through a semester to those students in danger of failing a class. Search for improved academic success has yielded mixed results. On-line Advising Manuals and Information.

6. **University of Wisconsin, Washington State, Tusculum College, Western Kentucky University**  
 ✓ On-line Advising Handbook/Toolkit
7. **University of South Carolina, University of Maryland, Penn State, University of Indiana, Bloomington, Washington State University, Arizona State University, Evergreen State College, Montclair State University**  
 ✓ Extensive On-line Database of Information for First-Year and Transfer Advising Information
8. **States of Texas, California, Alabama, Washington. Provides transfer credit course information – TCCN, ASSIST, ACSC, TRACS respectively (see below).**  
 ✓ Transfer credit course articulation information on-line:
- ASSIST (Articulation System Stimulating Inter-institutional Student Transfer): Statewide Student Transfer Information for California. Help for Students. Answers the following:  
 How will I get university credit for courses I've taken at the community college?  
 How can I fulfill my lower-division GE requirements before I transfer?  
 How will the courses I've taken be applied to university requirements?  
 Assumption: If students have access to more complete and accurate information, they will be in a better position to make more informed decisions.  
 Select institution and academic year and courses will be matched between community college or other California academic institution with any four-year California institution of education.
  - California State University Mentor:  
 Free service to all students applying to Cal State. Helps students to create their own personal academic planner to help ensure they meet CSU entrance requirements all the way through graduation. Gives students information about all CSU campuses to help student make an informed decision about which campus best matches their student needs with help of Student Campus Matching Assistant. *Allows for on-line application process for first-years and transfers also.* (Combines application process with initial advising.) Students can use CSU Mentor to communicate directly with various academic and administrative departments at any CSU campus via e-mail. CSU Mentor also provides links to ASSIST (see above) to further assist students with transfer of credits.
  - Cougar TRACS (Transfer Credit System): Provides help in planning transfer of credits to Washington State University. View requirements from any degree program at WSU and enter transfer coursework from other schools. A custom report shows how credits earned outside institution will apply to a selected degree. Students may maintain records over a period of time and make addendum if planning to transfer at a later date. Also offer a transfer course equivalencies list for basic reference information - matches many two-year college courses from around the country (ex. Nassau County Community with SU).
  - AGSC Stars (State of Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee): Hosts approved transfer guides, course listings, requirements, and guidelines and links to home pages, transfer pages, and contacts. System only constructed to account for

transfer of in-state credits. This agreement guarantees the transferability of coursework listed among in-state institutions of higher education (See Technology/Web). Created in 1994 by act of legislature. Developed no later than September 1, 1998 a statewide first- and second-year level general studies curriculum to be taken at all public colleges and universities in the state. Developed no later than September 1, 1999 a statewide articulation agreement for the transfer of credit among all public institutions of higher education in the state. What this means for students: Students can now obtain AGSC Approved Transfer Guide via the STARS Internet System. The Transfer Guide guarantees the transfer of credit for courses listed on the guide. In addition to receiving credit for the coursework listed, transfer students must also graduate in the same number of total hours as native students in the same major.

- TCCN (Texas Common Course Numbering System): A voluntary co-operative effort among Texas community colleges and universities to facilitate transfer of first and second year general-level coursework. It provides a shared, uniform set of course designations for students and advisors to use in determining course equivalency and degree applicability of transfer credit on a statewide basis. To date 110 institutions participate. Also hosts a transfer guide that recommends specific common courses to ensure degree applicability and transfer of credit hosted by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Also offers a history of the development of the TCCN system.

**TABLE I – Summary of Deans’ Survey Responses**  
**(See attached Excel Chart)**



**TABLE II – Summary of Focus Group Areas of Concern  
(See attached Word Chart)**

**TABLE III – Summary of Focus Group Recommendations  
(See attached Word Chart)**