

*Please note Section 5.17 of the 2010-11 Faculty Handbook was corrected after the printing of the Handbook. The corrected section is below.*

## **5.17 Principles of Academic Advising**

- Academic advising at WCU includes academic, career, and personal components. Faculty and Professional Advisors must be experts in the academic component, including academic policies and support resources. They must also be informed about career opportunities and resources in their own disciplines as well as related disciplines. Advisors should make appropriate referrals when it is in the best interest of the student.
- Academic advising is the responsibility of both faculty and professional advisors.
- Academic advising is part of the normal professional load for faculty at Western, and adequate time should be set aside for quality advising. A reasonable full-time faculty advising load is between 20 and 33/1 (Advisor Load, N.D.; Habley, 2002). When evaluating faculty as part of the Annual Faculty Evaluation and when considering promotion, tenure and merit pay, department heads should consider both the quantity of advisees per faculty member and the quality of advising. Faculty with unusually heavy advising loads, greater than 33/1, should be given special consideration, compensation or course release time to ensure the quality of advising.
- Because academic advising is a significant part of the academic mission at WCU, advising will be evaluated for faculty as part of the Annual Faculty Evaluation. Advising will also be factored into promotion, tenure, and merit pay decisions as determined by department T.P.R. documents. Professional advisors will be evaluated under the personnel rules and regulations applicable for SPA and/or EPA employees.
- An effective academic advising system dictates that all who serve as advisors participate in on-going training.

### **Processes Supporting Undergraduate Academic Advising Model**

- All new campus-based students (freshmen, transfers, and readmits) will have their initial contact with the Advising Center, Student Support Services, Honors College, or the TRACS Office in the College of Education and Allied Professions. Initial academic advising will be carried out through a process, which includes, but is not limited to, phone, letter, web, and email contact with in-coming students prior to enrollment. Initial enrollment will be finalized during freshman and transfer new student orientations.
- Incoming students, freshmen, transfers, and readmits, are encouraged to declare a major as soon as possible. Students with 45 hours or more are required to declare a major prior to enrollment.
- Students will be assigned to an advisor based on their academic interests. Undeclared students will be advised to seek career counseling and testing services through Career Services, the Advising Center, and Student Support Services.
- As soon as a major is declared, students will be assigned to a faculty advisor in that major.
- Academic advising processes, as well as advisor training, will be coordinated and monitored by the University Advising Council consisting of a faculty member from each college, and representatives from the Advising Center, Student Support Services, Honors College, Academic Success Program (ASP), Educational Outreach, Admissions, Registrar, and Residential Living. A training manual has been developed and will be regularly updated. The University Advising Council will coordinate all university-wide advisor training sessions.
- Academic advising will have specific value in the tenure, promotion, reappointment, merit pay and annual faculty evaluation processes as defined by the department T.P.R. document. All advisors, whether faculty or staff, will be evaluated on an annual basis according to the personnel policies and procedures pertaining to their respective classifications. The University Advising

Council will develop and provide suggested tools for advisor evaluation including: student evaluations, narrative self-evaluations, file audits, etc.

### Definitions:

- **Professional Advisor** An advisor, counselor, faculty or staff member assigned to the Advising Center, Student Support Services, Honors College, or TRACS Office.
- **Faculty Advisor** A fully qualified full-time faculty member whose responsibilities include advising students in the department with declared majors.
- **Major Contact Person** The department head will serve as or designate a major contact person for declared majors. This person will have the following roles and responsibilities:
  - Coordinate the scheduling of freshman orientation sessions during extended orientation.
  - Ensure that contact is made with each newly declared major in the program to welcome them to the department.
  - Assign advisors in accordance with departmental protocol.
  - Ensure that the newly declared major and faculty advisor make initial contact.
  - Serve as liaison with the professional advisor assigned to the program. The professional advisor will contact this major contact person when an undeclared student wants to talk with someone about the major or to declare a major in the department.
  - Remind instructors of 100- and 200-level courses in the department to report fifth week grades.
  - Remind faculty advisors of freshmen majors to be available to discuss reported fifth week grades with freshmen advisees who request help.

### Roles:

- **Professional Advisors: TRACS Office**  
**Responsibilities:** The Teacher Recruitment Advising Career Support (TRACS) initiative places professional advisors in the College of Education and Allied Professions whose responsibilities include academic advising for students majoring in Elementary and Middle Grades Education, Physical Education, Special Education, and the Birth-Kindergarten Distance Education Program.
- **Professional Advisors: Educational Outreach**  
**Responsibilities:** Distance Learning students eligible for admission to WCU must complete a two-stage process. Stage one is admission to WCU. Stage two is admission to an approved program. Students not yet admitted to an approved program may be offered enrollment as an undeclared student to complete coursework toward the Liberal Studies requirement. Educational Outreach provides academic advising support to students while in this status.
- **Professional Advisors: Advising Center, Student Support Services, and Honors College**  
**Responsibilities:** Professional advisors advise undeclared students and assist advisees in identifying an area of interest and declaring a major. In addition, each professional advisor in the Advising Center will be assigned to a College or departments within Colleges to work students intending to declare majors in that College. Professional advisors in the Advising Center and Student Support Services serve as liaisons to the Colleges to facilitate communication and student hand-offs. Assigned professional advisors will communicate regularly with the Faculty Major Contact Person for freshmen and transfer students in each major to facilitate the declaration of major process for students and to assist students and faculty as needed regarding academic advising.

## New Student Process

- Beginning each April for fall admits and November for spring admits admitted students are directed to complete CatWalk, a web application designed to help guide and prepare newly admitted students from the point of admission to orientation.
  - CatWalk is completed by all newly admitted undergraduate students, including Freshman, Transfer, ASP, Honors, and International students. CatWalk is only accessed by campus-based students; it is not intended for Distance Learning Program students.
  - CatWalk assists the Advising Center by streamlining and organizing administrative processes in preparation for Orientation. It enables the assignment of professional advisors to incoming students who build tentative course schedules before a student arrives for orientation.
  - CatWalk also allows the Advising Center to create and run various reports related to class seating demands, major selection, and important enrollment requirements (i.e. tuition deposit and immunization requirements).
- During New Student Orientation, professional advisors meet with parents and new students.
- During New Student Orientation assist with schedule adjustments, declaration of major, and change of major.
- During first semester, meet individually with all undeclared new students before completion of the third week of class. Assess adjustment to university life and make referrals as appropriate.
- Each semester meet with undeclared students to discuss 5th week grades and establish action plans for all grades less than “C”.
- Advise undeclared students for early registration.
- Provide alternate pin numbers (alt pin) for undeclared students to register via web registration.

### Additional responsibilities

- Teach sections of USI 130 as needed.
- Teach the Learning Contract class, LC 101, for new freshman and transfer students placed on Academic Probation with a GPA within the range of 1.0 to 1.999 at the end of their first semester. Students placed on Academic Probation with a cumulative GPA in this range at the end of their first semester must participate in the Learning Contract program during their second semester. Students who do not choose this option are not eligible to continue enrollment in the University for one term.
- **Faculty Advisor** (Major advisor)  
**Responsibilities:** Faculty advisors in each major will continue to provide comprehensive advising to declared advisees in the program. Contacts that are expected to occur with freshmen and first semester transfer advisees include:
  - Provide to and discuss with the advisee the major eight-semester plan.
  - Discuss specific requirements and expectations for the major.
  - Discuss course sequencing, specifying what years and/or semesters various courses are offered.
  - Discuss careers and various career paths for graduates of the major.
  - Discuss reported fifth-week grades (with students who request advice).
  - Discuss scholarship opportunities (Rhodes, Truman, etc.).
  - Discuss intern/co-op opportunities.
  - Encourage students to join student professional organizations and become involved in other student life organizations/activities.
  - Discuss adjustment to the university as it concerns academic progress.
  - Encourage advisees to use available support on campus as needed.
  - Advise for early registration and approve next semester’s course schedule.

- Provide all advisees who have declared majors with their alternate pin numbers (alt pin) for web registration. (Students with declared majors cannot get this number from the Registrar, Advising Center, Student Support Services or Honors College because these agents do not know whether or not the student has met with the faculty advisor.)
- **Department Heads**  
**Responsibilities:** Department heads facilitate the designation of a Faculty Major Contact Person for each undergraduate major in the department and will communicate with the designated Contact Person to monitor and facilitate completion of the role responsibilities.
- **Associate Deans**  
**Responsibilities:** Associate Deans meet with professional advisors assigned to respective colleges once each month throughout the academic year.
- **Academic Program Deans**  
**Responsibilities:** The dean of each undergraduate college supports and monitors the academic advising model. The dean also facilitates regular communication between the Faculty Major Contact Person for each major and the assigned advisors in the Advising Center, Student Support Services, and Honors College.

### **Advisor Training and Development**

- An effective academic advising system dictates that all who serve as advisors participate in on-going training.
- Advising processes, as well as advisor training, will be coordinated and monitored by the University Advising Council consisting of a faculty member from each college, and representatives from the Advising Center, Student Support Services, Honors College, Academic Success Program (ASP), Educational Outreach, Admissions, Registrar, and Residential Living.
- A training manual has been developed and will be regularly updated. The University Advising Council will coordinate all university-wide advisor training.

### **Advising Program Evaluation**

- The University Advising Council will meet annually to review the Undergraduate Academic Advising Model and to update the model as needed.
- Academic advising will have specific value in the tenure, promotion, reappointment, merit pay and annual faculty evaluation processes as defined by the department T.P.R. document. All advisors, whether faculty or staff, will be evaluated on an annual basis in accordance with their respective evaluation processes. The University Advising Council will develop and provide suggested tools for advisor evaluation including: student evaluations, narrative self-evaluations, file audits, etc.