

Faculty Advising Manual
Western Carolina University
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Faculty Advising Manual

Western Carolina University

Introduction

This advising manual for faculty has been prepared as a resource tool to assist advisors working with students at Western Carolina University. This manual may be used for training purposes and supplemented with information specific to individual departments.

An overall understanding of the Western advising process includes an overview of the institutional mission. As with teaching, research, and service, an advising system needs to relate to and flow from the institutional mission statement. Western's mission and aspirations are included below and are also found on the website at <http://www.wcu.edu/univcatalog/gcatalog/univ.htm>.

Mission

Teaching and learning constitute the central mission of Western Carolina University. The university seeks to create a community of scholarship in which the activities of its members are consistent with the highest standards of knowledge and practice in their disciplines.

The commitment of the community to service, research, and creative activities complements the central mission and extends the benefits of its scholarship to society. As a major public resource for Western North Carolina, the university assists individuals and agencies in the region through the expertise of its faculty, its staff, and its students.

Aspirations

Western Carolina University aspires to provide an environment in which students, faculty, and staff jointly assume responsibility for learning, where the free exchange of ideas, intellectual challenge, and high standards of scholarship prevail.

The university prepares students to become contributing and informed citizens in a global community. By working both independently and collaboratively, graduates of the university have demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of an educated person, including:

- the ability to think critically, to communicate effectively, to identify and resolve problems reflectively, and to use information and technology responsibly;
- proficiency in the intellectual and technical skills of a disciplined study in the arts, sciences, or professions;
- an appreciation for the creative and performing arts; and
- a basis for continued personal development and lifelong learning.

To encourage and protect the free and open interchange of ideas, the university strives to provide experiences that foster the development of respect among all its members toward the larger communities of which it is a part. Accordingly, the university encourages its students, faculty, and staff to display the following traits of citizenship:

- behavior characterized by honesty, integrity, and responsibility;
- service to others;
- awareness of and sensitivity to the concerns of diverse people and cultures; and
- commitment to stewardship of the natural and cultural environment.

Academic Advising

Advising Model

ADVISEMENT MODEL
3/17/2004

Western Carolina University

Advisement Model.

3/17/2004

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Advisement Model

3/17/2004

Two recent changes in policy and practice affect academic advisement at Western Carolina University. The Faculty Senate passed a policy that requires all students to declare a major before or upon completion of 45 semester hours. Secondly, incoming first year students have the opportunity to declare a major prior to initial enrollment. These changes should result in an increased number of freshmen with assigned majors in academic departments and an increased opportunity within departments for advising consistent with the goals of the university to support students academically.

University Advising Philosophy Western Carolina University adheres to the philosophy that advising is an integral part of instruction and makes important contributions to student learning and development.

Mission

Teaching and learning constitute the central mission of Western Carolina University. The university seeks to create a community of scholarship in which the activities of its members are consistent with the highest standards of knowledge and practice in their disciplines.

Principles of Advisement (adapted from Faculty Handbook, Section 5.17)

1. Advisement 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.
2. Advisement is the responsibility of both faculty and professional advisors.
3. Advisement is part of the normal professional load for faculty at Western, and adequate time should be set aside for quality advisement. 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.
4. Because advisement is a significant part of the academic mission at WCU, advisement will be evaluated for faculty as part of the Annual Faculty Evaluation. Advisement 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.
5. An effective advisement system dictates that all who serve as advisors participate in on-going training.

Processes Supporting Undergraduate Advisement Model

1. All new Cullowhee students (freshmen, transfers, and readmits) will have their initial contact with the Advising Center, Student Support Services, or Honors College. Initial advisement 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.
2. 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.
3. 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, Advising Center, and Student Support Services.
4. As soon as a major is declared, students will be assigned to a faculty advisor in that major.
5. Advisement processes, as well as advisor training, will be coordinated and monitored by a University Advisement Coordinating Committee consisting of a faculty member from each college, a representative from the Advising Center, Student Support Services, and a representative from Student and Academic Affairs. A training manual has been developed and will be regularly updated. The University Advisement Coordinating Committee will coordinate all university-wide advisor training sessions.
6. Advisement 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 Advisement Coordinating Committee 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 either the Advising Center, Student Support Services, or Honors College.
Faculty Advisor	A fully qualified full-time faculty member whose responsibilities include advising students in the department with declared majors.

Roles and Responsibilities

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.

Three groups of Professional Advisors: Advising Center, Student Support Services, and Honors College

Overview: Professional advisors will continue to advise undeclared students and to encourage and support advisees in identifying an area of interest and declaring a major. In addition, each professional advisor in the Advising Center and Student Support Services will be assigned to a College to work with some or all majors in the College (See list of Adviser Assignments below). 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.

Responsibilities:

New Freshmen

- Beginning each February for fall admits and October for spring admits, via phone, contact all new admits who have paid deposits.
- Establish a WebCT account for each new admit as soon as deposit is paid.
- Encourage Orientation Registration.
- As soon as contact is established assist new students with decision of major (1. Using WebCT lead students through completion of interest inventories, abilities assessments, and values clarification instruments. 2. Via phone conference discuss results of assessments. 3. Encourage declaration of major.)
- Via WebCT administer the College Student Inventory (CSI)
 - Via phone conference discuss results.
 - Establish action plan for academic success.
- After completion of declaration of major discussion and CSI discussion, via phone conference advise students regarding fall class schedule.
- After thorough discussion of major interest and student needs, register new students for fall classes.
- Prepare new students for New Student Orientation.
- During New Student Orientation, meet with parents and new students. Foster and facilitate relationship building between students and department of declared major.
- During New Student Orientation, meet with undecided students,
 - Support decision making,
 - Bolster confidence in selection of major,

- Assess the indecisive situation and make appropriate referrals and assign homework to be completed prior to fall semester that will further the decision making process.
- During New Student Orientation assist with schedule adjustments, declaration of major, and change of major.
- Fall 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, Establish action plans for all grades less than “C”.

Transfer students

- Beginning in February for fall admits and October for spring admits, via phone, contact all new transfer admits who paid deposits.
- Discuss major interest, assign a professional advisor connected to the student’s major interest.
- Discuss transfer credits, degree requirements, course waivers, substitutions, and declaration of major.
- Advises for first semester courses.
- Ensures that student is registered for first semester courses.
- Ensures that a faculty advisor is assigned for students who declare.
- During Transfer and New Student Orientations meet with assigned advisees. Fosters and facilitates relationship development with department of student’s major.

General responsibilities

- Each semester teach the Learning Contract class for first semester students whose GPA is below 2.00.
- Advise undeclared students for early registration.
- Provide Registration Access Numbers (RAN) for undeclared students to register via web registration.

Faculty Advisor (Major advisor)

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 (Rhode, 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 Registration Access Number (RAN) 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

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

Associate Deans meet with professional advisors assigned to respective colleges once each month throughout the academic year.

Associate Deans are responsible for contacting freshman majors who have received one or more "Unsatisfactory" 5th week grades. The following is the recommended (required?) course of action, at a minimum:

1. First semester freshmen (<15 hours)
 1. who receive one "U" - send a letter explaining available university resources (such as study skills workshops and recommending the student take advantage of these resources.
2. Second semester freshmen (15-29 hours)
 1. who receive one "U" - send same letter as 1.1 directly above.
3. Other students receiving unsatisfactory 5th-week marks in 100- and 200-level courses should receive a letter as described in 1.1. above.

Other action taken by the Associate's Dean office could include calling students, recommending students discuss their grades with their faculty advisors and/or teachers, recommending additional workshops, etc.

Undergraduate College Deans

The dean of each undergraduate college supports and monitors the advisement model. The dean also facilitates regular communication between the Faculty Major Contact Person for each major and the assigned advisors in the Advisement Center and Student Support Services.

Advisor Training and Development

An effective advisement system dictates that all who serve as advisors participate in on-going training.

Advisement processes, as well as advisor training, will be coordinated and monitored by a University Advisement Coordinating Committee consisting of a faculty member from each college, a representative from the Advising Center, a representative from Student Support Services, and a representative from academic affairs. A training manual has been developed and will be regularly updated. The University Advisement Coordinating Committee will coordinate all university-wide advisor training.

Advising Program Evaluation

The University Advisement Coordinating Committee will meet annually to review the First Year Student Advisement Model and to update the model as needed.

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

List of Flow Charts

Faculty Advisor
Major Contact Person
Professional Advisor
Declaration of Major and Advising Following Declaration

References

Advisor Load Statistics: National averages in 1997, as collected for the ACT Fifth National Survey of Academic Advising and published in NACADA's Monograph, No. 6. (n.d.) Retrieved February 23, 2004, from http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Advising_Issues/advstats.htm

Habley, W. R. (2002). Advisor Load . Retrieved February 23, 2004 from the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* Web site: http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Advising_Issues/advisorload.htm

FACULTY ADVISOR

Receive a list of students from the Major Contact Person (MCP)

During departmental advising session held during freshmen orientation, discuss:

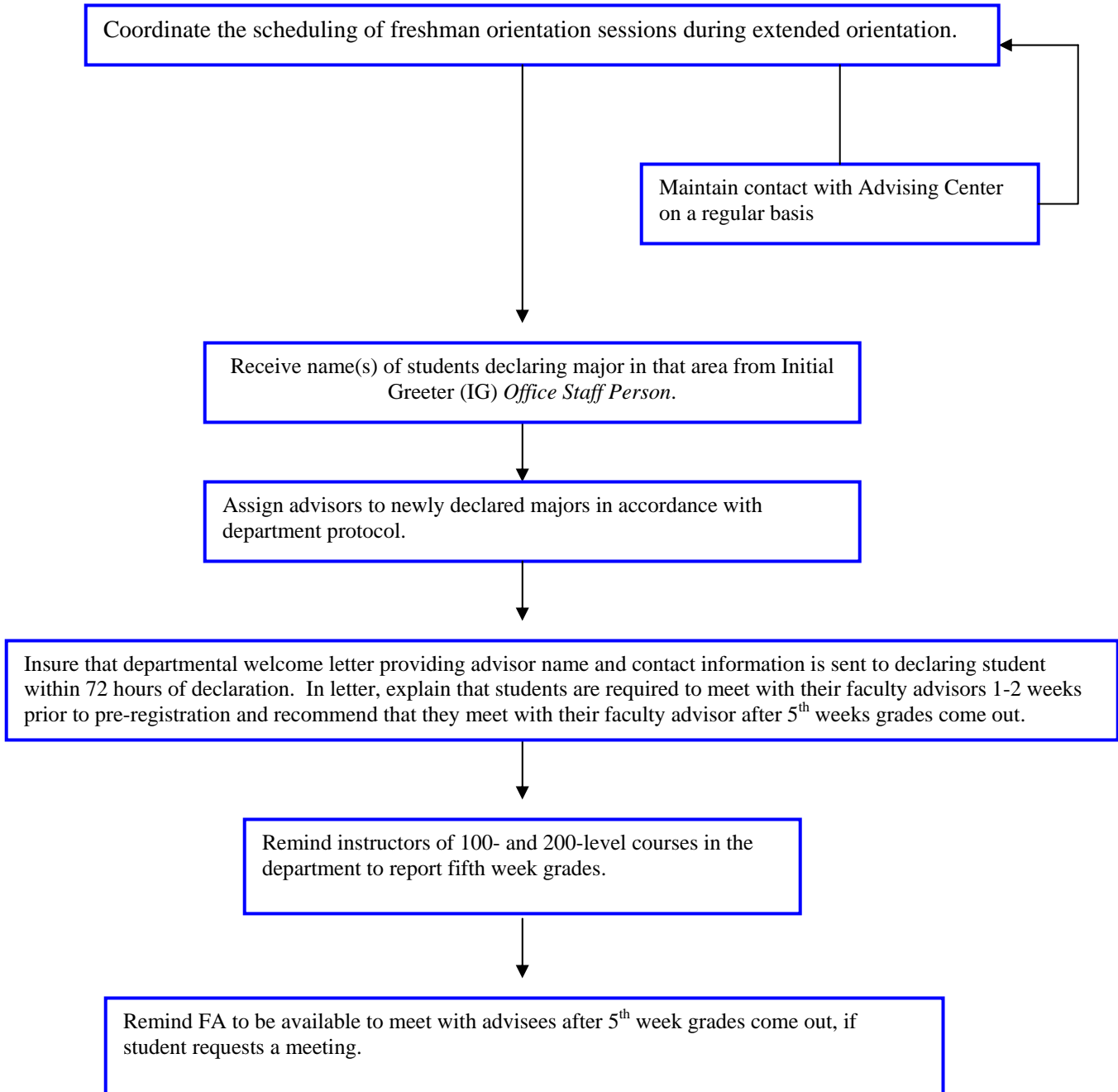
- 8 semester plan
- Major requirements
- Course sequencing
- Internships and/or co-ops
- Student membership in professional organizations
- Campus support available
- Involvement in other student life organizations/activities

Upon student request, Discuss 5th week grades & possible action plans for problem courses (Tutoring center attendance, time mgmt, etc.)

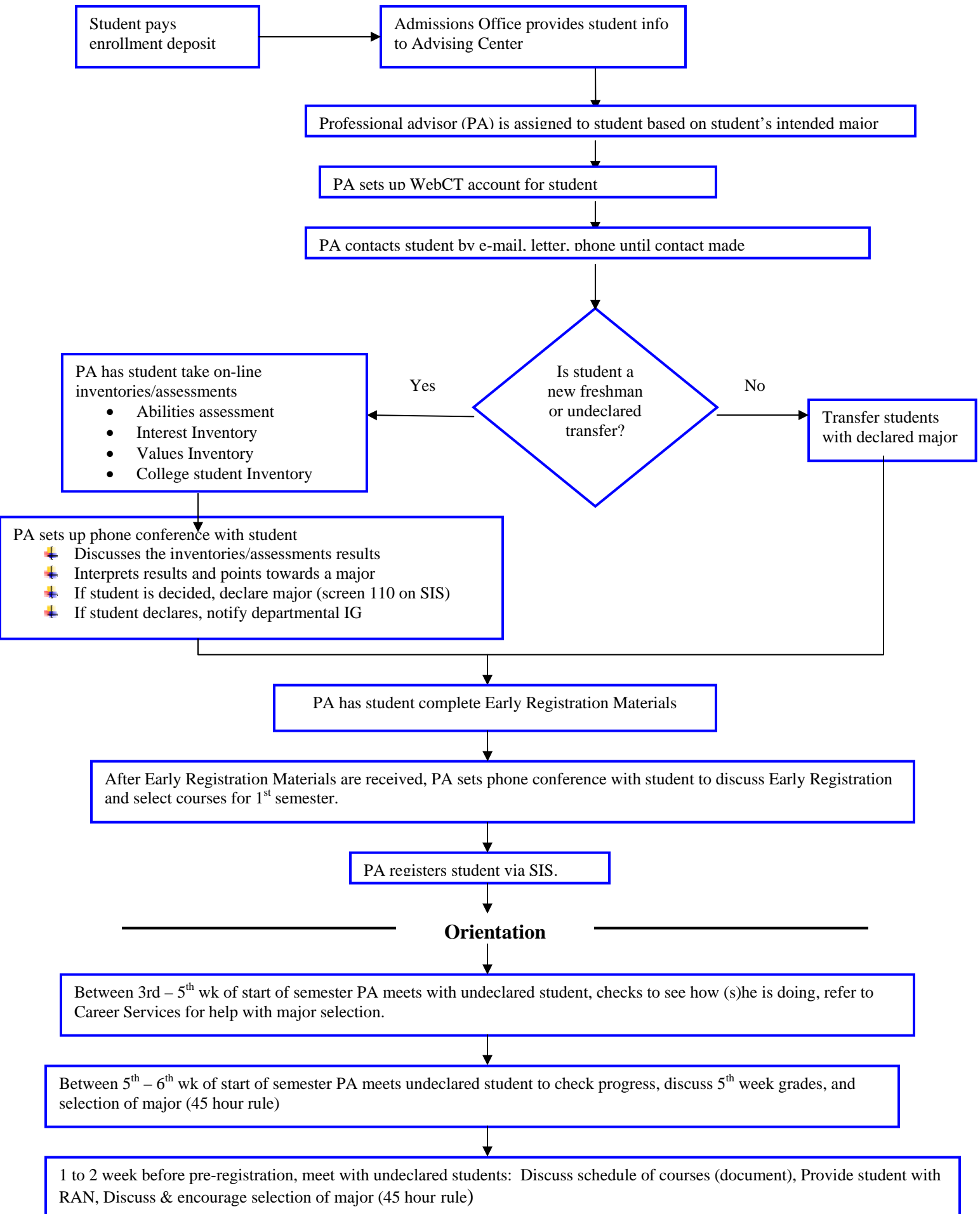
Within 1 to 2 weeks prior to pre-registration, schedule appointment with student to discuss:

- Follow-up on previous discussions (check progress on 5th week grade action plan)
- Career related issues
- Schedule courses for next semester
- After advising, give students their RAN to register via web for students
- Leadership development experiences and opportunities
- Scholarship opportunities (Rhode, Truman, etc.)
- Any other student questions, including more discussion on what campus support is available, membership in student organizations, etc.

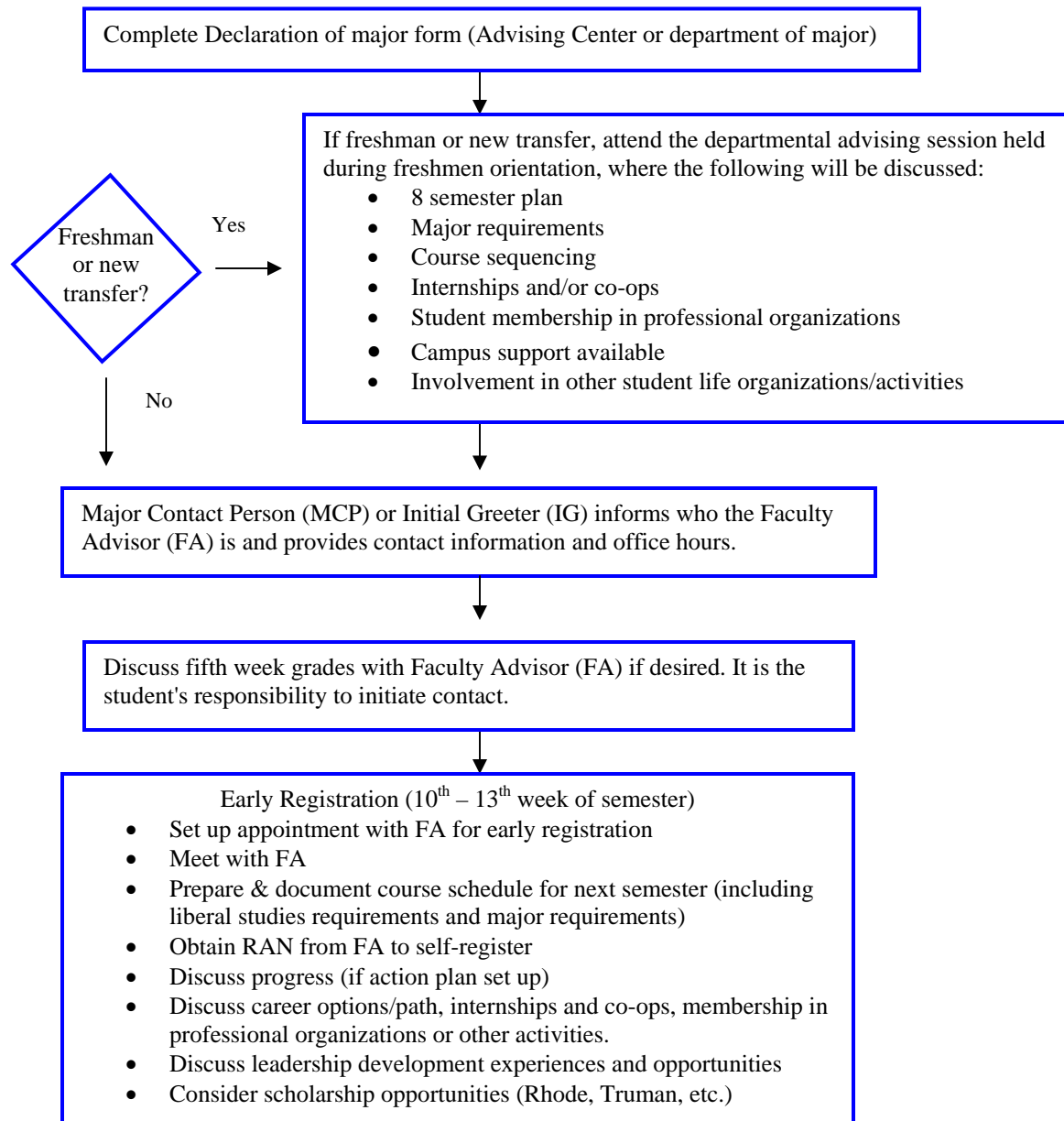
MAJOR CONTACT PERSON (MCP)



PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR



DECLARATION OF MAJOR AND ADVISING FOLLOWING DECLARATION



Role of the Advisor

Specific advisor responsibilities may vary based on departmental guidelines. All advisors have the responsibility to:

- Be sensitive to the needs of students
- Inform students of office hours and location
- Be aware of the contents of *The Record*, The Advisor Handbook, and other advising-related materials
- Understand graduation requirements, particularly those in General Education and Liberal Studies
- Understand course prerequisites and departmental guidelines
- Be informed about Western's majors to be able to provide assistance to students exploring majors
- Help students understand institutional and departmental requirements
- Provide students with accurate and up-to-date information about academic policies
- Assist students in selecting courses that are congruent with their abilities
- Serve as a university resource for students
- Use all available resources to assist in the advising process
- Be aware of laws and university policies as they relate to academic advising and student privacy
- Know the students' responsibilities and assist students in compliance
- Refer students to the appropriate person or office when necessary
- Ask questions

Relational Activities that Enhance Student Comfort

- Know the student's name, the correct pronunciation, and the name by which he or she prefers to be called
- Be prepared for the session
- Maintain eye contact, if culturally appropriate
- Ask probing questions to clarify uncertainties
- Be friendly, open, and accepting
- Hear as well as listen, observe and understand the non-verbal communication
- Sit without barriers between you and the student
- Focus on the student (no phone interruptions, etc.)

Core Values for Academic Advising

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) is an organization of professional advisors, faculty, administrators, students and others from a variety of settings who do academic advising or otherwise work to promote quality academic advising on college and university campuses. For additional information about NACADA, please consult their Web site at <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/>. NACADA has adopted the following Core Values which can provide a framework for us to measure our performance as advisors at Western.

1. Advisors are responsible to the students and individuals they serve by giving accurate and timely information, maintaining regular office hours, and keeping appointments.
2. Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process, including admissions, orientation, financial aid, residential living, health services, athletics, career services, psychological counseling, and student support services.
3. Advisors are responsible to the college or university in which they work (WCU); respect the opinions of their colleagues; remain neutral when students present them with comments, questions, or opinions about faculty or staff; and are non-judgmental about academic programs.
4. Advisors are responsible to higher education generally, and honor the concept of academic freedom.
5. Advisors are responsible to the community, including the local community, state, and region in which the institution is located, and interpret the institution's mission, standards, goals, and values to its community.
6. Advisors are responsible to their professional role as advisors and to themselves personally, and are encouraged to seek opportunities for professional development.

Intrusive Advising

Intrusive advising begins at Orientation during which we review academic requirements, why college matters, and how to be a successful student. Generally, students who attend Orientation feel better about becoming members of the college community and feel more secure about making their academic decisions. Once the semester begins, advisors meet with students during the first couple of weeks after Drop/Add to discuss transition and connection issues. During the semester, advisors meet with students concerning their five-week grades especially if the student has received unsatisfactory grades for any of their courses. In addition, we require students to meet with an advisor prior to registration to discuss motivation, to evaluate their academic progress, to make recommendations for campus resources, and to discuss courses for the next semester. Intervention during the semester enables students to take the necessary steps to stay on course. We also encourage students to talk about their life and career goals and to be pro-active about fulfilling those goals. Students who make connections within the community through volunteer service, service learning, and internships are more highly motivated to succeed.

Factors in Developmental Advising

Burns Crookston has provided a framework for developmental advising which transcends both the general and the specialized theory bases, which could be applied to advising. He offers ten factors, which may be applied directly to advising interactions. In order to fully understand each of the ten factors described below as a series of questions, each of the factors should be preceded by the stem, "For this student, in this situation... ." Crookston's term for the factor follows each statement.

1. To what extent does the advisor look for academic potential within the perspective of performance? (Abilities)
2. To what extent does the advisor assist the advisee to identify and show ownership for his/her goals? (Motivation)
3. To what extent does the advisor focus on intrinsic outcomes of education such as achievement, mastery, acceptance, status, recognition, and fulfillment? (Rewards)
4. To what extent does the advisor view the advisee as self-directed and responsible? (Maturity)
5. To what extent do the advisor and the advisee share the initiative to understand and fulfill various requirements? (Initiative)
6. To what degree is the content of the interaction shared by the advisee and the advisor? (Control)
7. To what degree is responsibility for action shared by the advisor and the advisee? (Responsibility)
8. To what degree is the advisor open to learning? (Learning Output)
9. To what extent do the advisor and the advisee share in the evaluation of decisions? (Evaluation)
10. To what extent does the interaction show evidence of trust between the advisor and the advisee? (Relationship)

Crookston suggested that advising (teaching) "...is concerned not only with specific personal or vocational decisions but also with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness and problem-solving, decision-making and evaluation skills." Crookston's vision for advising as teaching is realized when the advising relationship is seen as an evolving process, shaped and reshaped by both the advisor and the advisee.

Source: Crookston, B.B. (1972). A developmental view of academic advisement as teaching. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 13(1), 12-17.

Academic Advising

Role of the Student

The role of the student in the advising process is active not passive. The advisor must make it clear to the student what these responsibilities are, including:

- Inform the Registrar's Office of changes in local address and phone number
- Check mail box, campus e-mail, and phone messages regularly
- Make appointments with advisor for pre-registration
- Plan course schedules in advance of each advising appointment during pre-registration period
- Be on time for advising appointment
- Contact advisor if unable to keep appointment
- Come prepared to appointment with advisor
- Initiate questions about degree program or programs
- Discuss long-range goals with advisor
- Check course descriptions for prerequisites before registering for a course
- Refer to the university catalog for information on majors, academic policies, deadlines, and degree requirements
- Verify all information received from university personnel (refer to current catalog section on Academic Regulations)
- Explore majors that are of interest
- Keep track of academic progress
- Understand how to calculate GPA
- Make final decisions about choices concerning academic matters
- Follow through on referrals made by advisor
- Ask questions

Policy #72

Student Records

Western Carolina University accords all the rights under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, to students. A "student" is defined as a person who (1) has applied, been accepted and registered by the University at either the graduate or undergraduate level, (2) is currently attending the University, or (3) has attended the University. Except as provided below, no one outside the institution shall have access to nor will the institution disclose any information from students' education records without the signed consent of students. Exceptions to this policy are:

- Personnel within the institution with legitimate educational interest;
- Officials of other institutions in which students seek to enroll;
- Persons or organizations providing students financial aid;
- Accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation function;
- Persons in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena including those issued by either a federal court or North Carolina state court; Persons in an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of students or other persons;
- An outside contractor who is a "party acting for" the institution and is performing a service which the institution would otherwise have to perform for itself.

Educational records are defined as those records directly related to a student and maintained by the institution or by a party acting for the institution. The term "education records" does not include the following:

- Records of instructional, supervisory, administrative, and certain educational personnel which are in the sole possession of the maker thereof, and are not accessible or revealed to any other individual except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record;
- Records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the educational agency or institution that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement.
- Records relating to individuals who are employed by the institution, which are made and maintained in the normal course of business, relate exclusively to individuals in their capacity as employees, and are not available for use for any other purpose.
- Records relating to a student which are:
 - Created or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional, acting in his/her professional capacity or assisting in a paraprofessional capacity;
 - Used solely in connection with the provision of treatment to the student; and
 - Not disclosed to anyone other than individuals providing such treatment. Physicians of the students' choosing, however, may review health records.

A request for release of education records to a third party must be documented. Since a signed consent is required, neither telephone nor electronic mail (E-mail) requests will be honored; however, facsimile (fax) requests and computerized requests submitted by the student through a WCU system requiring the use of a Personal Identification Number (PIN) will be honored. (The PIN, known only to the student, serves as an electronic signature.) In addition, to release information to the

parent(s) of a dependent student, Western Carolina University requires the written consent of the student. All requests for disclosure of any information from a student's education records are maintained in the Registrar's Office.

Within the Western Carolina University community, only those members, individually or collectively, with a legitimate educational interest are allowed access to a student's education records. For these purposes, 'legitimate educational interests' means (1) the information or records requested are relevant and necessary to the accomplishment of some task or determination; and, (2) the task or determination is an employment responsibility for the inquirer or is a properly-assigned subject matter for the inquirer's employment responsibility.

Disclosure to a school official having a legitimate education interest does not constitute institutional authorization to transmit, share, or disclose any or all information received to a third party. **An unauthorized disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education record of the student is prohibited.** The public posting of grades by instructors is prohibited. Students are expected to access grades through the web.

Western Carolina University does not release educational records of a deceased student unless: (1) authorized by the executor/executrix of the deceased student's estate; (2) authorized by the deceased student's parents if no executor/executrix has been appointed; or (3) death is established by a certified copy of a death certificate. At its discretion, the institution may provide Directory Information in accordance with the provisions of the Act to include:

Student name Local and home address

Telephone numbers

Classification

Parent/guardian

County

Major field of study

Photograph

Dates of attendance

Degrees

Honors and awards received

The most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student

Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

Weight and height of members of athletic teams

Electronic mail (E-mail) address

Students may withhold Directory Information by notifying the Registrar's Office in writing within five working days from the first day of classes for the fall term or by the first day of classes for subsequent terms.

Requests for non-disclosure of Directory Information will be honored until the student requests that the hold be removed. Students are warned, however, prior to making a decision to withhold personally identifiable data, that undesirable consequences frequently occur, such as names of students on the Dean's List are not published, names are not listed in commencement bulletins, and requests from prospective employers are denied. Forms are available in the Registrar's Office, 201 HFR Administration Building, and on the web at

<http://www.wcu.edu/registrar/Forms/students.asp>.

The law provides students with the right to inspect and review information contained in their education records, to challenge the contents of their education records, to have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory, and to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if the decisions of the hearing panels are unacceptable. The Registrar's Office at Western Carolina University has been designated by the institution to coordinate the inspection and review procedures for student education records. Students wishing to review their education records must make written requests to the Registrar's Office listing the item or items of interest. Only records covered by the Act will be made available within forty-five days of the request. Students may have copies made of their records with certain exceptions (for example, a copy of the academic record for which a financial "hold" exists or a transcript of an original or source document that exists elsewhere). Students may not inspect and review the following as outlined by the Act:

- Financial information submitted by their parents;

- Confidential letters and recommendations associated with admissions, employment or job placement, or honors to which they have waived their rights of inspection and review;
- Education records containing information about more than one student, in which case the institution will permit access only to that part of the record which pertains to the inquiring student;
- Records connected with an application to attend Western Carolina University if that application was denied;
- Those records that are excluded from FERPA.

Students who believe that their education records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading, or is otherwise in violation of their privacy or other rights, may discuss their problems informally with the Director of Equal Opportunity Programs. If the decision is in agreement with the students' requests, the appropriate records will be amended. If not, the students will be notified within a reasonable period of time that the records will not be amended, and they will be informed by the Director of Equal Opportunity Programs of their right to a formal hearing. Student requests for a formal hearing must be made in writing to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs who, within a reasonable period of time after receiving such requests, will inform students of the date, place, and time of the hearing. Students may present evidence relevant to the issues raised and may be assisted or represented at the hearings by one or more persons of their choice, including attorneys, at the students' expense. The hearing may be conducted by any individual, including an official of the University, who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing.

Decisions of the hearing panels will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, will consist of written statements summarizing the evidence and stating the reasons for the decisions, and will be delivered to all parties concerned. The education records will be corrected or amended in accordance with the decisions of the hearing panels if the decisions are in favor of the students. If the decisions are unsatisfactory to the students, the students may place with the education records statements commenting on the information in the records, or statements setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decisions of the hearing panels. The statements will be placed in the education records, maintained as part of the students' records, and released whenever the records in question are disclosed. Students who believe that the adjudication of their challenges were unfair or not in keeping with the provisions of the Act may appeal, in writing, to the Chancellor of the institution, whose decision will be final. Further, students who believe that their rights have been abridged, may file complaints with the Family Policy Compliance Office, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605 concerning the alleged failures of Western Carolina University to comply with the Act.

Initially approved: September 1, 2000

Administering office: Registrar's Office

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) may impact you in more ways than you ever imagined, especially if you work directly with students. The following self-quiz is designed to see how well you know this Act.

1. A student can call the Registrar's Office and receive information about his or her GPA over the phone.
2. A student with a financial hold on his or her transcript still has the right to view his or her transcript in the Registrar's Office
3. An instructor can list grades by copying the final grade roll and blocking the names so that only the student numbers show.
4. Unless notified otherwise, the institution considers all students under age twenty-one as dependent on their parent(s) for release of information purposes.
5. If a student has not restricted directory information, anyone can call and find out what the student's major is.
6. If a student has not restricted directory information, anyone can call and find out the student's total credit information.
7. The FBI can obtain information about a student under investigation without a written release from the student.
8. The institution officials with a legitimate educational interest can share educational records about a student without notifying the student.
9. The Institution must comply with a lawfully issued subpoena after a reasonable effort is made to notify the student of intent to comply.
10. If a student from the Western Carolinian (university news paper) asked you for the number of black students who dropped from your class this term, can you provide that information.

Adapted from the University of Northern Colorado's "The Advisor's Advisor," Spring 1994, Vol. IX.

ANSWERS TO HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR FERPA

1. **True** The issue that exists with this is the possibility of releasing information to someone other than the student. It's best to ensure the student is who he or she claims to be, by asking additional questions that would be sure to identify the student to be who he or she says they are.
2. **True** The student always has the right to inspect records; however, there are some limitations. These limitations include records containing information about other students. In addition, the student cannot get a paper copy of his or her transcript.
3. **False** The information is still personally identifiable by the fact that it is alphabetically ordered. Also, foreign students or non-traditional students may have a different and easily identifiable number.
4. **True/False** This gives us more flexibility in releasing information to parents. However, this decision would be at the discretion of the Institution. Western has not taken up the option to provide student records to parents of students who are financially dependent upon them.
5. **True** The student's major is one of the directory information elements.
6. **False** Total credit information is not considered directory information.
7. **True/False** Depending on the information warranted. FERPA is very specific on individuals/agencies that can obtain information.
8. **True** "School officials" with a "legitimate educational interest" can gain information about a student without consent of a student (e.g., a professor and a department chair can discuss a student's grade).
9. **True** Any questions about subpoenas should be referred to the Registrar's Office or The Institution's legal counsel. Note: As long as a subpoena is issued by the State of North Carolina or a North Carolina Federal Agency the University must comply. University Police must be consulted before action can be taken.
10. **True** Yes, an instructor can provide this information but must use professional judgment.

EXAMPLES OF WHEN, WHY AND HOW DATA MAY BE RELEASED

Q. A parent contacts you, as the son or daughter's advisor, to discuss the student's grades. How do you respond?

A. You may discuss the student's grades and or academic progress with a parent under the following conditions:

- The student and parent are together with you and the student is giving permission to discuss academic information.
- The student provides written permission to discuss his or her academic progress with the parent(s) over the phone. In this case, the student should also provide appropriate information so that you can be reasonably sure that you are talking with the authorized person(s).
- The student initiates the telephone call in your presence, turning the call over to you.

As an advisor, however, you are not required to discuss the student's academic progress with the parent, nor anyone else, unless the student gives his or her permission.

Q. A local law enforcement agency (not University Police) contacts you concerning a student and requests a copy of the student's schedule indicating they need to contact this student. How do you respond?

A. Refer the officer to University Police if it is a safety issue or a violation of the law is involved. Otherwise, refer the individual to the Registrar's Office. A student's class schedule is not directory information and may not be released without the student's consent or an appropriate court order.

Q. A student from the school newspaper has asked you for the number of black students who dropped sections of a class in your department this term. Can you provide this information?

A. This is not a FERPA issue. An aggregate number is not personally identifiable to specific students and so is allowable under the Act.

Q. A faculty member in the History Department requests a copy of a student's transcript to help him write a letter of recommendation for the student. Can he or she receive it and use it to write the letter?

A. It can be surmised that the faculty member does have a legitimate educational interest in the accomplishment of this task, but he or she must be made aware of the fact that he or she cannot include any non-directory information (e.g., specific classes taken in a semester, grades, GPA, etc.) without the written permission of the student because this information would be going to a third party. He or she may include his or her personal observations about the student without permission.

Q. A student denied admission to an engineering program is subsequently admitted to the education program. The student's request to see the records regarding his or her application to the engineering program. Can he or she see them?

A. The request would be denied as FERPA rights are provided only to applicants that are accepted and enrolled in a program. He or she would have rights to the educational records once the student is registered for classes in the Education program only.

Q. You are thinking of posting a list of students and their delinquent admissions documents on the bulletin board outside your office. Does FERPA allow you to do this?

A. Since this is not directory information, the posting would be a violation of FERPA. In fact, any posting that includes lists of student's and their ID# without prior consent is not allowed for the same reason.

Advising Tips, Forms Used, and Other Helpful Information

Drop/Add – During fall and spring semesters, students have 5 full days from the time classes begin to adjust their schedules using drop/add (check with the Registrar's Office for days of drop/add during summer sessions). Continuing and transfer students can do this online because their advisor will have given them their Registration Access Number (RAN). New first-year students, however, are not given their RAN their first semester and are required to see an advisor and complete the Registration/Schedule Adjustment form, which is then sent to the Registrar's Office. The form is available online at <http://www.wcu.edu/registrar/Forms/students.asp>.

Tip: Make sure the class a student wants is open before dropping the class already enrolled in.

Tip: If a course is full, the student may use the Registration/Schedule Adjustment form to obtain permission and signature from the instructor or department head to enroll in the course, and then the student takes the form to the Registrar's Office to complete the enrollment.

Late Registration – The Registrar determines the "last day" of Late Registration. For regular semesters, students generally have about a week and a half after classes begin to late register. Students must get a Late Registration form from either the Advising Center or the Registrar's Office, complete the form and obtain appropriate signatures, then take the form to the Registrar's Office to complete their registration.

Course Load – 12 hours is considered full-time. If a student drops below 12 hours, he or she needs to check with Residential Living and Financial Aid, as either one could be affected. A student can take 19 hours without scheduling an overload. For 20+ hours, the student must complete a Course Overload form and obtain the permission and signature of the advisor, department head, and dean. The student must then take the form to the Registrar's Office to complete the registration process. The Course Overload form is available online at <http://www.wcu.edu/registrar/Forms/students.asp>.

Withdrawal Period Prior to One-Half of the Semester – The last day to drop with a "W" is listed in the class schedule for the current semester. It is usually around the 8th week of classes (one-half of the semester). Student obtains the Withdrawal Form Prior to One-Half of the Semester from the Advising Center or Registrar's Office. Course withdrawal means a "W" will be on the transcript. Students may withdraw from a course, whether passing or failing, during the first half of the term with no penalty. The grade of "W" is not calculated in the GPA. The student needs to check with Residential Living and Financial Aid, as either one could be affected. The form is available online at <http://www.wcu.edu/registrar/Forms/students.asp>.

Withdrawal Period After One-Half of the Semester – After one-half of a term, but prior to fourteenth week of semester (or before the last two class days of summer session), a "W" will be assigned only for written, verifiable mental health, medical, legal, or administrative reasons. The student obtains the Course Withdrawal Form After One-Half of the Semester from the Advising Center or the Registrar's Office. The Mental Health withdrawal must include the Procedural Guidelines for a Mental Health Course Withdrawal and the inclusion of a Faculty Information Form which can be obtained from the Advising Center, Counseling Center or Registrar's Office. The Course Withdrawal form is available online at <http://www.wcu.edu/registrar/Forms/students.asp>.

NOTE: Although there is no limit to the number of withdrawals allowed, several "W's" on a transcript might be a red flag to potential employers. It may also result in a tuition surcharge after the student attempts 140 hours and eight regular semesters. In addition, the student's financial aid will be affected if student withdraws from (or fails) 30% or more of their credit hours.

University Withdrawal – To withdraw from the university (i.e. drop all courses), a student must complete a University Withdrawal form in the Office of Student Affairs. If an emergency prevents a student from completing the withdrawal process before leaving campus, and the student or his or her parent gives you permission, it is acceptable for the student's advisor to contact the Office of Student Affairs on behalf of the student.

Declaration of Major – Students may declare a major at orientation or during any academic semester. Students must declare a major after completing 45 hours of college credit, and will not be allowed to register for classes until they do. To do this, the student must obtain a Declaration of Major form from the Advising Center, the Registrar's Office, or the Department of the major. The advisor should fill out the top portion of the form, including the student's name, social security or ID number, the term in which the student is declaring, the codes for old college, degree, and major, and the name of the current advisor. The student then answers yes or no to four questions, and signs and dates the form. Students may begin the process of declaring their major in the Advising Center and take the Declaration of Major form to the

			4 HR	3 HR	2 HR	1 HR
A	=	4	16	12	8	4
A-	=	3.67	14.68	11.01	7.34	3.67
B+	=	3.33	13.32	9.99	6.66	3.33
B	=	3	12	9	6	3
B-	=	2.67	10.68	8.01	5.34	2.67
C+	=	2.33	9.32	6.99	4.66	2.33
C	=	2	8	6	4	2
C-	=	1.67	6.68	5.01	3.34	1.67
D+	=	1.33	5.32	3.99	2.66	1.33
D	=	1	4	3	2	1
D-	=	0.67	2.68	2.01	1.34	0.67
F	=	0	0	0	0	0

Scheduling First-Year Students – Students without transfer credit will be placed in a First-Year Seminar, ENGL 101, and JS 101 (Jumpstart computer training – a 1 hour 45 minute class to educate students on Western’s computer requirements, the Pipeline and campus email which meets only once prior to the first day of classes). If a student indicates an interest in a major, he or she will be enrolled in an introductory course unless the department indicates that the introductory course is inappropriate for first-year students (refer to the undergraduate catalog). If the student does not indicate an interest in a major, then the student will be enrolled in other Liberal Studies courses.

For students who transfer in more than 15 hours of credit (15.1 is the minimum), the First-Year Seminar is optional, and they may take another Liberal Studies course to complete the 42 hours. If the student transfers in 30 or more hours, they are not eligible to take a First-Year Seminar and must take another Liberal Studies course. If a student transfers in an Associates of Arts or Sciences (**not** Associate of Applied Sciences) Degree from a Community College in North Carolina, the entire Liberal Studies Program is waived. Contact the Registrar’s Office and obtain a transcript evaluation for transfer students.

If students have decided on a science major, enroll them in science courses for their major instead of science courses for Liberal Studies. If students need math for their major, be sure to place them appropriately by referring to their SAT or ACT scores, their high school courses and grades, the Math Placement Guidelines provided by the Math Department, and Nory Prochaska, Director of the Math Tutoring Center.

If students want to take a foreign language, be sure to see if they have taken a foreign language in high school, and then refer to the Foreign Language Placement Guidelines provided by the Modern Foreign Language Department. The Modern Foreign Language Department head must approve exceptions to the Foreign Language Placement Guidelines.

Be sure to check if the student indicates he or she will be transferring in AP credit. If so, it is important to register the student in the appropriate class, but be sure that he or she receives the credit, and make schedule changes if necessary prior to the start of the semester.

Learning Communities – Each Learning Community (LC) has two or more courses and may include a First-Year Seminar. If a student is enrolled in a LC, he or she must be enrolled in and remain in each course in the LC. If the student wants to change their schedule and take a different First-Year Seminar, he or she must drop all courses in the LC. Residential Living assignments are coordinated with the LC; however if students select a roommate who is not in a learning community, the residential living assignment will be based on the roommate selection rather than on the LC.

Courses-in-Common – Courses-in-Common may include a First-Year Seminar and a compatible course. If a student wants to drop one of the Courses-in-Common, he or she must drop both prior to the start of classes; however, students who wish to drop one or the other may do so during the first five days of class called the Drop/Add period. Courses-in-Common are not coordinated with Residential Living.

Liberal Studies Program – The Liberal Studies program began in the Fall 2001 semester. It was modified in the Fall 2003 semester. The Liberal Studies program is designed to provide the student with a broad range of knowledge and a lifelong love of learning. It consists of 42 hours of coursework: 21 hours of Core courses, a 3-hour First-Year Seminar, and 18 hours of Perspectives.

The Core includes two English Composition courses, one Health course, one Math course, one Speech course, and two Science courses (from different departments). The Math and Science categories are met when a student takes higher-level courses in Math and Science (with a lab or applied component) for their major. The student still needs to complete the total number of hours to graduate and will take additional courses from Liberal Studies, their major or in electives.

The First-Year Seminar must be taken during the student's first semester, the student can take only one First-Year Seminar, and it cannot be repeated for grade replacement. The First-Year Seminar is optional when a student transfers in more than 15 hours (15.1 is the minimum), but if a student transfers in 30 or more hours, he or she is ineligible to take the First-Year Seminar, and the student must take three hours of Liberal Studies to complete the 42 hours.

The Perspectives include two Social Science courses (from different departments), one History, one Humanities, one Fine and Performing Arts, and one World Cultures. One of the Perspectives must be an Upper-Level Perspective course from the 300- or 400-level courses which is generally taken after the student completes at least 50 hours of credit, and must be a course outside the student's major. When a student takes courses in the Perspective categories that fulfill their major requirements, those courses will be applied toward their major and the student will be required to take additional Liberal Studies courses to complete the 42 hours of the Liberal Studies program.

The Liberal Studies checksheet is online at <http://www.wcu.edu/liberalstudies/> and in the printed versions of the fall and spring semester class schedules. The course descriptions are online at <http://www.wcu.edu/UnivCatalog/Catalog/index.htm> and in the printed version of the undergraduate catalog.

Academic Reevaluation

Learning Contract – First semester freshmen and new transfers will be placed on academic probation if their grade point average falls within the range of 1.99 or lower at the end of their first semester. Students placed on academic probation with a cumulative grade point average 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 enroll in the University for one term. If readmitted after a lapse in enrollment, students are reminded that they will return to WCU under the general guidelines for academic probation.

The Learning Contract Program specifies that these students work closely with an academic advisor. The student and advisor will discuss academic performance issues, set realistic goals, and make the necessary plans to reach those goals. Students will be linked with the campus resources that can help them succeed. Follow-up contacts will occur throughout the semester.

When appropriate, the student's academic advisor will decide whether the student needs to use the University's grade replacement policy and repeat two to four courses from the previous semester. (Students are not allowed to repeat their First-Year Seminar course.) Additionally, these students must make at least a 2.30 grade point average on a full-time course load during their second semester or bring their cumulative grade point average to good standing. Failure to achieve these guidelines will result in academic suspension.

Summer Contract – Students whose GPAs are below a 2.0 at the end of the spring semester may sign a summer contract stating they will enroll in a minimum of 6 hours over the summer and obtain a semester GPA of 2.3 or a cumulative GPA of 2.0 in order to return in the fall.

Two-Year Rule – An undergraduate with a GPA below 2.0 who has not attended the university for two or more calendar years and who is eligible for readmission is given the option of having the two-year rule applied or not applied. If the two-year rule is applied, all courses completed before the interruption are treated as if they were transferred from another institution. For more information refer to the undergraduate catalog.

Practice Scenarios

Individually or in small groups, read the following scenarios and decide how you might handle them.

1. Juliet is a first-semester junior and has just gotten engaged to her high school sweetheart, Romeo. He lives back home, which is four hours away, and works for his father. She's seriously considering dropping out in order to get married sooner. You know she has tremendous potential and you have concerns about the decision she might make.
2. Melissa comes to see you and she's really upset. Before she came to WCU, her parents told her that she needed to major in business – anything else would be a waste of their money. However, Melissa explains to you that she is interested in dance and she seriously dislikes her pre-business courses.
3. Ned has returned to WCU this semester on academic probation. He has become very anxious about his ability to make the required grades this term to avoid being academically suspended.
4. Thelma is a second-semester freshman who made a 3.8 in the fall. She comes to you complaining about her roommate Louise. Apparently Louise isn't taking her academics seriously. Louise knows she'll probably be suspended at the end of the semester and has given up trying. Thelma's complaints include Louise's constant partying, her loud music, and her overall lack of respect for Thelma's need to study.
5. A female student arrives in your office and informs you that her roommate was raped the night before, following a party. The student tells you that her roommate is terribly afraid to talk to anyone about what happened and she refuses to leave her room.
6. Carl calls you and tells you that his mother just called. She told Carl that his father had just had a massive heart attack. Carl asks you if there is anything he needs to do before he leaves campus.
7. Cynthia, a second-semester junior, tells you that she just found out she is pregnant. She had previously relied on her parents to pay for her education. After telling them the news, her parents refused to continue providing her with financial support.
8. Reggie, a student in your class, has performed more poorly than all other students on the last two tests. You've noticed that he appears distracted in class, has trouble paying attention, and seems to take longer to complete tests than other students.