

Academic Advising in the Residence Halls

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April 2007

### Academic Advising in the Residence Halls

The importance of academic advising cannot be underestimated. Academic advising provides students with information and planning advice to make the best decisions possible towards achieving their academic goals. Academic advisors are some of the best tools that we can offer our students. The intent of this initiative was to provide first year and second year students' greater access to quality academic advising.

This initiative brought well-trained academic advisors to the residential halls in the evenings during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year registration windows to supplement their regular advising sessions and trouble-shoot issues when students were actually registering. The advising times were publicized through posters (see Appendix) throughout the Residential Halls and by e-mail sent out to all Resident Life staff and residents.

#### Procedure

During spring advising week (the week of April 16<sup>th</sup>), five academic advisors provided nightly coverage in select residence halls to provide greater access to advising. Advising stations were set up in Lucas B10 on main campus and Lourdes 159 on west campus. Advising was offered from 7pm to 11pm during advising week. Flyers were posted and residence hall staff were emailed information as advertisement of the initiative. When a student was advised, their name was logged on a contact sheet. After the advising session, each student was encouraged to complete a survey to gain feedback. Feedback was compiled and the final report was written.

#### Objective Completion

***Objective 1 - To provide 30 total hours of evening drop-in advising in the residential halls.***

We offered 22 hours of advising. Because of the unusually condensed registration schedule all registration windows opened within the same week. This shortened the peak

registration times for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students to three days instead of four. However, during 7 of those 22 hours, we did have three advisors available, instead of just two.

***Objective 2 - To staff two Res. Hall advising stations during these peak times, one on main campus and one on west campus.***

We staffed two registration stations, one in Lucas B10 and one in Lourdes 159 from 7:00-10:00 pm Tuesday night, and 7:00-11:00 pm Wednesday and Thursday nights.

***Objective 3 - To provide advising to at least 30 students.***

We provided advising to 21 students. All had already met with their advisor, but had a variety of questions ranging from the blue card process to how to decide between to majors. Most of the questions can be considered general in nature. The students seemed appreciative of the opportunity to get another perspective on their course choices.

***Objective 4 - To have 100% of the students complete a short feedback instrument.***

Although it was attempted to 100% feedback, 90% of the students completed the feedback survey (unfortunately two got away from us!).

***Objective 5 - To achieve at least a 90% advisee satisfaction rating.***

100% of the students strongly agreed that their advisor was helpful, friendly, and gave good information. 90% strongly agreed and 10% agreed that the time of the advising was convenient, and 95% strongly agreed and 5% agreed that the location of the advising was convenient.

Also, housing staff was contacted for feedback regarding the project. Those who responded indicated support for the program and the hope that it would continue in the future, with the hope that continuing publicity efforts would result in more students using the service.

### Future Considerations

Although we didn't achieve our target of 30 students, we feel the results justify continuing the program. The numbers of students served were comparable to the day-time "Drop-In Advising" sessions staffed by Advising and Retention Staff. If evening sessions were staffed by advisors who were allowed to flex their work hours to compensate for the long hours, no additional resources would be needed.

Traffic was balanced at the two locations. We recommend continuing to staff both main and west campus. However, the hours could be reduced to three a night, from 7:00-10:00 p.m., perhaps ending as early as 9:00 p.m. on Thursday nights.

It will also be important to coordinate with Information Technology to ensure that ISRS connections are temporarily enabled in the rooms that advisors will be working. Lastly, we would need to work with the housing staff to see if more visible locations could be found. Higher visibility may help increase the number of students served. We may also want to get creative in marketing the program, for example, by serving free popcorn and calling it "Pop-In Advising." Generally, food tends to be an effective way to draw in students, so it may be worth a try.