



Reaching higher

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The mission of the Advisement Coordination Center (ACC) is to support the campus-wide developmental advising program. The ACC collaborates with the collegiate Student Affairs Offices and Academic Support and Student Life to help students develop sound educational, professional, and life goals.

The Advisement Coordinations Center supplements and supports the University of Minnesota Duluth's faculty advising initiatives.

The Advisement Coordination Center provides walk-in access for any student.

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Review their Graduation Planner and suggest adjustments to course sequencing or major-minor combinations. Engage them in exploring careers, graduate school, study abroad, and internships. Through these developmental discussions the role of the advisor truly moves to that of being a mentor – a relationship students tell us they want with faculty.

THE SECRET IS OUT! We know the key benchmarks on the path to a successful student experience. While each student is the primary architect of his/her college experience, advisors are essential players in engaging students in curricular and co-curricular activities and for reinforcing the positive student behaviors that contribute to a successful educational experience. For more information, contact your collegiate associate dean or student affairs office or visit UMD's retention and graduation website, www.d.umn.edu/goto/ImproveRetention.

Major and Career Development Course Appropriate for Many

Do you have students who need to explore majors, aren't sure of their major, feel that their major isn't an appropriate fit for some unidentifiable reason? Then possibly a Major and Career Exploration course would be an appropriate referral. A recommendation to your advisee to take CnEd 2535 could be what is necessary to help them sort out their values, interests and goals and assist them in developing a plan for timely graduation.

UMD's focus on the 30-60-90 Student Success Roadmap initiative has outlined the milestones necessary for students to effectively graduate in four years. Major and career development is a necessary component for students as they work through their benchmarks. For many years, Psy 3535 was offered to assist students process through this in a structured way. The course has been redesigned and is now available at two levels through Continuing Education. CnEd 3535, Strategic Career Development, provides focus on issues most appropriate for the 60+ credit level student, whereas the two credit CnEd 2535 has been developed to address the concerns and issues of the first and second year student. CnEd 3535 has been offered as an independent study and will soon be offered, also, as a face-to-face classroom version. CnEd 2535, Major and Career Exploration, was first offered spring 2008 as a face-to-face course and more than 40 students successfully took advantage of the opportunity.

Students in the course repeatedly commented on the benefit of the integration of assessments taken, panel presentations and discussions regarding their exploration and decision making of majors and careers. Encouraging students to focus energy on these decisions early in their college career will enhance their ability to plan appropriately for classes, as well as study abroad, internship, volunteer and work opportunities, within their four years at UMD.

Both CnEd courses will be available to for spring 2009 enrollment.

Be Advised!

A Newsletter for UMD Faculty Advisors

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

NOVEMBER, 2008

Academic advising is a process of information exchange that empowers students to realize their maximum educational potential. The advising process is student-centered and will result in the student gaining a clearer understanding of himself/herself, and the experience of higher education.

University of Michigan - Dearborn (2002).

30-60-90 Student Success Roadmap

by Mary Keenan, Co-facilitator, UMD's Graduation Rate Initiative

Many academic advisors are concerned with moving beyond simply assisting students with course selection and with engaging their advisees in the actions and scholarship that lead to a successful college experience and life-long learning. The 30-60-90 Student Success Roadmap guides advisors in this DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH.

A little background In May 2006, a team of staff and faculty was charged with developing a strategic approach to improve UMD's retention and graduation rates. The team analyzed previous university studies, conducted a literature review of work related to student success and retention, identified best practices, and gathered ideas from faculty, administrators, staff, and students. The team's work led to development of UMD's Student Success Strategy Map, which provides a comprehensive listing of strategic priorities and opportunities for action to increase student success on our campus.

The Strategy Map is a planning tool for administrators, faculty and staff, but WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS? Should not they ultimately be the ones most engaged in the process? Shouldn't they take significant ownership of whether their college experience is successful? Absolutely! Students need to be aware of the actions that lead to a more successful experience and to monitor their individual progress.

The 30-60-90 STUDENT SUCCESS ROADMAP was developed in order to share the significant strategic priorities of the Strategy Map with students. It incorporates the strategic priorities into a clearly marked route to student success. This fall semester, all new freshmen are being introduced to the 30-60-90 Roadmap through classes or mandatory information sessions. Continuing students will receive an email announcement with a link to the 30-60-90 Roadmap website. Student reaction to the Roadmap has been very positive; they find it easy to follow, intuitive to use.

However, it is not enough to simply tell students what they should be doing – IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR STUDENTS TO BE ENGAGED IN MONITORING THEIR PROGRESS. This is where academic advisors play a critical role. Using the Roadmap's benchmarks as a guide, ask your advisees how much time they are spending on coursework, whether they are involved in co-curricular activities, and how their courses and activities relate to each other and their goals. Provide consistent messages by encouraging your advisees to complete 15 credits per semester or to enroll in a summer course to reach the 30, 60, and 90 credit benchmarks. Connect students to appropriate resources that support their academic, personal, and financial progress.

Improving Academic Advising: The Role of Student Association

by UMD Student Victor De Meireles



It seems that everyone has a different view on academic advising. As a student representative on Student Association (SA), I know students who frequently want to talk with an advisor. Often, they are anxious over classes, confused about their major, or concerned about a variety of other topics. Other

students do not share these concerns and feel they don't need to meet with an advisor, but meet only to remove the hold on their record. In terms of faculty members, many double as wonderful advisors. They are knowledgeable and have a passion for advising. Other faculty members, for a varied list of reasons, do not place a great importance on advising. Regardless of the reason, faculty members and students frequently view academic advising differently.

Among the many views on academic advising, students still identify certain characteristics of good advisors, independent of the field. The first characteristic students notice is whether their advisor has useful information. Almost exclusively, students visit an advisor to get information. The information the student receives is most beneficial when current and correct. Students also want to visit helpful advisors. Being helpful happens only after the advisor possesses pertinent information. A helpful advisor gives students this information and explains how to apply this information to attain the student's academic or professional goals. Without knowing how to use information, it becomes unread and useless. Poor advisors do not display these characteristics, they tend to be unavailable, and often have an "I don't care" attitude.

What are the consequences of poor advising? Poor advising has detrimental effects on most students, especially underclassmen. One bad experience early in a student's career can cause the student to be reluctant to ask for information or help in the future. It can lead to greater confusion and alienation. In the worst cases, alienated students decide to leave UMD. For an upper-classman, it could mean the difference between getting a job connection, a letter of recommendation for graduate school, or a timely graduation. In either case, poor advising has negative consequences for students.

In light of the negative consequences of poor advis-

ing, Student Association, the representatives of the student body, made Improving Academic Advising a top initiative for 2008-2009 for several reasons. First, SA heard that students would like to see more quality advisors. In other words, students want their advisor to have useful information and be helpful. Secondly, students want to recognize good advisors and reward them for their excellent advising. In addition, like good teaching techniques, advisors can share successful advising techniques. Lastly, this initiative promotes the University's goal of increasing retention rates. A study done by Beal and Noel (1980) found that a caring advisor or staff member is the most potent force for retention. We believe that improving academic advising will lead to higher retention rates.

SA has already taken several steps to examine academic advising at UMD. To start the process of examination, the Academic Affairs Committee has met with Kim Roufs, the Director of the Advising Coordination Center, to determine an appropriate course of action. Our goal is to examine and create an academic advising model that is helpful to students and practical for advisors.

The second step SA took to improve advising was for Ashley Brown, Vice President of Academic Affairs, to work with the Advisement Coordination Center staff in the world-renowned 3-M Transformational Leadership Program (TLP). The University of Minnesota used this program to evaluate higher education. The program focuses on process-improvement techniques. Ashley Brown believes, "[the TLP] will allow Student Association to examine and determine whether Academic Advising is being successfully completed at UMD, how we can fix gaps in performance, and maintain performance over time."

Lastly, SA is researching successful models of academic advising at other campuses with a unionized faculty. We have heard from several schools, including the University of Cincinnati, Fort Hays State University, and Youngstown State University. By conducting research and by using the TLP program, SA hopes to create a successful model of academic advising that meets the needs of students, faculty members, and advisors.

Please contact Ashley Brown at brow1713@d.umn.edu or Victor de Meireles at demei002@d.umn.edu if you have any suggestions, if you would like to know more information about SA, or if you would like to be involved

Career Talk For Your Advisees: Or, How to Answer Your Advisees Career Questions

Advisors may be the first professionals on campus to hear a student ask a career question or express a concern about their career plans. What can you do? Based on our work with faculty advisors here are some suggestions for answering some common questions:

How do I figure out the "right" major for me?

The process of figuring out what to major in begins with self assessment. Career Services offers a variety of assessments to help students learn more about themselves and how to relate what they know about themselves to major and career planning. The *Strong Interest Inventory*, the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* and *StrengthsQuest* are three of the most commonly used inventories; the *Strong Interest Inventory* identifies occupations and job titles related to interests, the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* identifies "personality type" which can be related to potential career choices, and *StrengthsQuest* identifies strengths and relates students to educational and career plans.

Refer students to the Career Services web site or the Career Services office for information on how to take the inventories.

When should I start thinking about career planning?

Now! Career Services has developed a list of recommended actions students can take each year called, "Planning Your Career-A Four Year Guide." The list corresponds with the 30-60-90 UMD Student Success Roadmap and is located on the Career Services web site. The plan identifies activities and resources for students to assist them in answering their career questions. The plan includes ways students can gather and assess information about themselves (interests, values, personality, skills and strengths), occupations, educational opportunities, and decision-making strategies.

How will I know if I can find a job in my field when I graduate?

Students tend to want a guarantee that they will find the "right" jobs immediately upon graduation. Finding a job takes time and preparation. To prepare, students need to know what employers are looking for in the candidates they hire and they need to know how to articulate their assets to employers.

What do employers want?

In addition to the skills needed for specific professions, employers are seeking candidates with a variety of skills. According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in 2008, the top ten qualities employers are seeking include, in this order: communication skills, strong work ethic, teamwork skills, initiative, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, analytical skills, flexibility/adaptability, computer skills and technical skills.

How can students learn to articulate their assets?

The first step is identifying them. Two inventories, the skills inventory on the Career Services web site and *StrengthsQuest* will help students identify their strengths. For more information and resources to use with your advisees, see the Career Services web site: <http://careers.d.umn.edu>.

If you have questions or suggestions, or would like to take any of the career assessments yourself, please contact Julie Westlund, Director, UMD Career Services. Email jwestlun or call 726-8964.

Contributed by Julie Westlund

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