

University Undergraduate Advising Council

Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2011

**Members Present:** Susan Villaume (Chair), John Dagley, Kathryn Flynn, Cathie Helmbold, Bob Karcher, Nancy McDaniel, Lori McLean, Dixie Mitchell, Constance Relihan, Jenny Schuessler, Beth Yarbrough

**Guests Present:** Nick Backscheider, Terrell Bean (for Beth Ann Mabrey), Jonathan Hallford (for Kathie Mattox), Gail Holmes, Ruthie Payne, Torey Plamer, Jay Skipworth, Andrew Taylor

- I. **Update on Mid-Semester Grades:** Jay Skipworth provided an update on the data from the fall pilot report of mid-semester grades.
  - Final grades from fall 2009 and fall 2010 (those with mid-term grades reported) were compared in an effort to identify any meaningful discrepancies.
  - The reports indicated fairly consistent patterns between the two samples of students; some improvements were seen in the fall 2010 group, but this is not enough to make a meaningful conclusion.
  - A recommendation was made that OIRA help with the monitoring process if we are going to encourage faculty to continue reporting mid-semester grades.
  - If the council wants to justify the benefits of this to faculty, data including a control group is needed to determine if the group with mid-term grades posted actually improves over those that do not receive mid-term grades.
  - It was noted that these reports only include D/F grades, withdrawals are not included. If we are to build a case for the merits of reporting mid-semester grades, then it is necessary to get the grade reports for all sections, not just those with grades reported. It is recommended that a statistician design a study and identify how much data would be needed before this issue can be taken before the University Senate.
  - In addition to a control group, more information is needed on what constitutes a mid-semester grade. Also, it is important to demonstrate the project's impact on retention.
  - It was suggested that the council develop a list of all studies that require data collection and analysis, and from that list prioritize what needs institutional-level support.
  - It was noted that there are issues with staying in pilot mode, this needs to go before the Senate now if the council wants to advocate for more widespread reporting of mid-term grades in the fall.
  - **Next Steps:** Nick Backscheider will help put together data for a senate presentation and will attend the next meeting.
  
- II. **Out of State Student Pilot Study Update**
  - Beginning last fall, Educational Support Services began pilot testing a peer mentor model whereby out of state (OOS) students were approached by current students in an effort to identify any academic or social issues.
  - Colleges and schools were given the option of utilizing different strategies, some contacted students in groups, some individually, etc. For example, the College of Education successfully utilized graduate students to target OOS students using GPAs, requiring them to make an appointment.
  - The Cater Center also contacts students with a 2.2 or less, and has experienced a strong response.
  - Peer advisors are a helpful first point of contact, Associate Deans may be a good resource to further encourage this project.
  - The College of Education has graduate programs in Counseling that could possibly assist this program and academic coaches.

- **Next Steps:** Anyone using peer advisors is requested to provide an update on its implementation in the college.

### III. Alternative PINS

- Dr. Villaume addressed issues related to the use of alternative PINS. Specific issues discussed involved the fact that a student is not alerted when they are blocked; the university needs to identify a procedure to let students know quickly when their registration is blocked/opened. Nick Backscheider is looking into possible ways of letting students know that their Alternative PIN is 11111 when they are unblocked.
- For students who transfer to different colleges, it was suggested that a statement be added to the major form that lets advisors add that a PIN has been set.
- A problem that compounds this issue is the fact that departments often add students without knowing there was a registration block. This is really training issue for those with access to add students—they should have to go to SPAPIN before adding anyone to check and see if the student has a hold.
- Also, if a department does see that students have a hold, they need to know who to tell students to go see in order to be cleared for registration.
- Another issue discussed involved how to require advising for re-admitted students. This issue needs to go the Associate Deans; if PIN setting is done automatically, it will catch most of these students.
- **Next steps:** Nick will work on the cautionary “text”; Dixie will work on the modification of the change in major form.

### IV. Advising Manual Sub-Committee

- The advising manual is posted on the UUAC website and will be posted on the Advisor’s Caucus.

### V. Website Sub-Committee

- The Website sub-committee has met and compiled a comprehensive list of FAQs. Identifying the responses to the questions has proven somewhat challenging, given that each college may have a different response to the same question. The members will continue to revise this list.
- **Next Steps:** Once completed, take the FAQs and answers to the Associate Deans.

### VI. Transfer Students Resource Committee

- Dr. Johnny Green will attend the next meeting to discuss a possible project/advisory group for transfer students.

### VII. Enhancing Advising Through Technology Sub-Committee

- The sub-committee identified several tools and recommendations, beginning with the use of SARS in all of the colleges for early alert, to make appointments, keep notes, do reporting, etc.
- In order for this to occur, the software should be accessible to all colleges and each should be able to choose additional features, such as IM and reminders to students of appointments.
- It was clarified that the notes feature in Degree Works is not permanent, and students may or may not be able to see them. Therefore, it was suggested that the notes feature in Degree Works be reserved for recording major things. SARS maintains a permanent record of all notes.
- **Next Steps:** make SARS available to everyone, make a recommendation to explore the notes feature further, take this to Academic Affairs.
- The committee also discussed transitioning to electronic transient forms. Since these forms are needed by other institutions, and students often decide not to use them, it would save more time and energy

for both the student and the advisor to make the form available electronically through the Registrar's Office.

- Since Degree Works will enable students to “shop” degrees, it makes sense to allow transfer students to see what will transfer to Auburn through keeping an ongoing list of courses transferred from other institutions.
- Many of our peer institutions have existing software in place as a tool for students and advisors.