

Connected:

An Academic Advising Communiqué



Excellence in Undergraduate Academic Advising Award Winners

Since 2006, the Excellence in Academic Advising Awards Program, created by the University Academic Advising Council (UAAC), has recognized outstanding undergraduate advising on the University of Arizona campus. The 2011-2012 winners are:

Volume 4, Number 7

March 2012



Please congratulate our award-winning advisors for 2012



In this Issue ...

Excellence in Undergraduate Academic Advising Award Winners	1
Reflections of a First-Year Advisor ... The Top 10 Things New Advisors Should Know ...	1
Let's give Students Their First Advising Syllabus @ New Student Orientation	2
New Student Orientation Changes	2
Degree Tracker News	4

Outstanding Emerging Professional Advisor
Renee Schafer Horton
Academic Advisor
School of Journalism
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Outstanding Professional Advisor
Alan Beaudrie
Program Coordinator, Senior
Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of
Public Health

Information about our Advising Celebration is coming soon ...

Reflections of a First-Year Advisor ... The Top 10 Things New Advisors Should Know By: Renee Schafer Horton

Editor's Note: Renee was invited to submit this article prior to the start of the advising awards selection process.

When I first announced I'd been offered a position as a University of Arizona academic advisor, those hearing the news were unanimous in one prediction: I'd get bored and wouldn't last a year. These folks – from former editors to teaching colleagues to a professor in my secondary education program – reacted out of a set of assumptions they had about advising that boiled down to this: Advising was reading a degree-plan, filling out a course sheet and handing it to students.

— Continued on Page 3



Let's Give Students Their First Advising Syllabus @ New Student Orientation

By: Nancy Stiller and Roxie Catts

New students often struggle with their transition to the college life because much of the terminology (a.k.a. jargon) used to describe processes, policies, and events is new to them. Syllabus is a word that may seem familiar to many students, but strategies to effectively use it are foreign to them.

Advisors have a unique opportunity to teach new students about using a syllabus by giving them their personal **advising syllabus** at New Student Orientation. Students can learn to be successful in the classroom by knowing how to read syllabi; understand goals, objectives, or learning outcomes; and pay attention to dates and deadlines. At the same time, they can develop a solid understanding of what academic advising is all about. Helpful information about scheduling appointments, required info sessions (for students considering your major), how students can prepare for their advising appointment, and anything else you want to get on their radar screens to help them get the most out of academic advising. This in turn will set the stage for the syllabi they will receive

We know that some of you may already be using an advising syllabus that you distribute at orientation or information sessions. Please consider sharing your syllabus with advising colleagues across campus. There is also an excellent article at the NACADA site that describes how to create an advising syllabus: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse/advisingissues/syllabus101.htm>. Finally, we would be *glad* to consult with you on creating your advising syllabus. Give us a call. We've love to help.

New Student Orientation Changes

By: Rachel Beech

As you likely know, Orientation has undergone a transformation ahead of the 2012 summer season. The transformation from a two to a one day orientation session is complete, and we look forward to implementing the new structure. We wanted to provide you with some updates and highlights of things coming this summer, and to remind you that we are here to be a resource as questions arise ahead of and throughout the orientation season.

New Student Orientation for freshmen at the University of Arizona will now take place over the course of one day. The program is focused on helping students to prepare for their first day of classes, and is focused on academics. In fact, the vast majority of the day is dedicated to learning about a student's college, registration via UAccess and modification of the pre-schedules so that students can walk away from orientation ready to start school. It will be a long day, with check-in starting at 7:15am and an expectation that some students will be modifying schedules until 5pm.

Registration for the New Student Orientation is completed via the Next Steps Center. The available orientation program dates for any particular student are based on a variety of academic factors as students will only see dates that align with their profile (i.e., Honors students will only see programs that include the Honors component, SALT students see SALT sessions, if an academic college reaches capacity for a particular date it will no longer display for students in that college). Due to the highly individualized nature of date availability, we are no longer posting the dates on the orientation website so students must log into the Next Steps Center to see program availability. Students can make changes to their reservation (change date, add or delete a guest, add room nights for the residence hall option in May and June) by logging back into the Next Steps Center and select 'Make a Change to My Orientation Reservation' in the completed items section under their Orientation program date reminder.

Completion of the academic to do list items in the Next Steps Center is critical to the success of a one day orientation program. All of the placement areas are available through a student's Next Steps Center once they have registered for their orientation program. This includes the ALEKS exam for Math placement, a student's calculated Writing placement score (if all necessary GPA and test score items are available in UAccess) and the online Second Language Placement exams in Spanish, French, German, Latin and Russian. Additionally, each of the placement areas has provided key information about the testing process, reassessment of placement and alternate arrangements based on transfer credit or AP/IB scores for students in Next Steps.

— Continued on Page 4

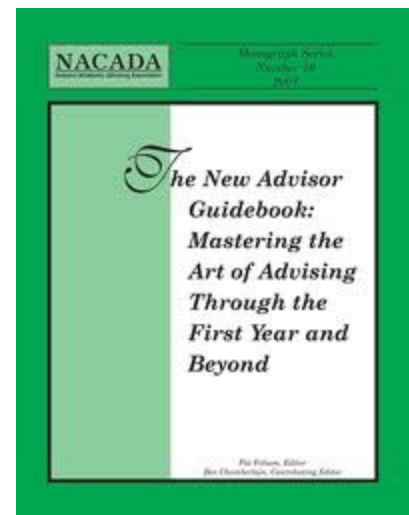
— Continued from Page 1

Rinse and repeat each semester. Knowing what I'd done most of my life (journalism) and what I chose as a second career (teaching high school), these well-meaning but misinformed friends were certain I'd soon long to graze in more intellectually challenging pastures.

Yes, there are probably advisors who fit the assumption above. They've settled into a practice in which neither they nor their students are challenged much beyond figuring out next semester's schedule. Ergo, their job is boring.

If an advisor like that had trained me, maybe I wouldn't be here celebrating my one-year anniversary. Luckily, that wasn't the case, so the naysayers of my new career were completely wrong in their predictions of ennui. In fact, it has been just the opposite. In the beginning, there was so much information in my head that I had B-deficits, GRO steps, and procedures for making exceptions in UAccess dripping out of my ears. When I was sent from the Douglass Building Mother Ship to my permanent home in the School of Journalism, I was terrified. How would I ever do this job solo? That's when I began learning the Top-10 Things New Advisors Should Know, the first of which is:

1. **You are not alone.** Other advisors are just a phone call away and most are willing to help. (Shout out to the SBS advising crew for offering tutoring or sharing materials, especially John McNeil, Heidi Creel, Sylvia Romero and above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty R Scott Johnson. Outside of SBS, thanks to Sarah Wieland, Rachel Hamm, Roxie Catts and Tharini Wijeweera.)
2. **Haste makes waste.** Avoid being rushed by students or the clock. If you can't find the answer/help the student solve the problem in one appointment, schedule a follow up.
3. **Use Advising Notes.** End your 30-minute meetings at minute 25, leaving five minutes to enter a note and read notes on the next student. This saves your tail when a student begins a session with, "Last time I was here, you said ..."
4. **When in doubt,** double-check catalog policies. If catalog is unclear, follow No. 1.
5. **Go to UPAC meetings,** attend UPAC seminars, volunteer for UPAC related activities. You learn things and make contacts across campus.
6. **To avoid frustration** with students who seem to forget even the most basic things, develop an advising-as-learning approach.
7. **Avoid negative people,** be they in the advising community or the larger UA arena.
8. **To help with Nos. 6 and 7,** cultivate relationships with advisors who view advising as dynamic.
9. **Do not always work through lunch.** The UA is an arboretum; walking it for 30 minutes gives a new perspective.
10. **Finally, if you think something's missing, provide it.** This fall I was looking for a new-advisors tour where we could ply unsuspecting student services folks with questions. An inquiry from a colleague helped me realize I wasn't alone. She too wanted to meet with someone from Financial Aid and the Registrar's Office and Study Abroad and the Think Tank and, for heavens sake, did anyone besides the Math people actually know what happened in the elusive Math 101 room? There was no such tour, so I created one and surprisingly, the sky did not fall in.



It is true that journalists are adrenaline-junkies who hate repetitive jobs. One day I was interviewing Shaq, the next stalking Faculty Senate members, and the next helping write the obit of a former Mob boss. It's hard to beat that variety, but I've found academic advising comes close. One minute you're with a 3.9 double major terrified she'll never find a job, the next advising a readmit who hopes he'll get it right this time, the next explaining policy to faculty or developing an advising assignment to help students connect the dots between their curricular choices and their career goals or life values.

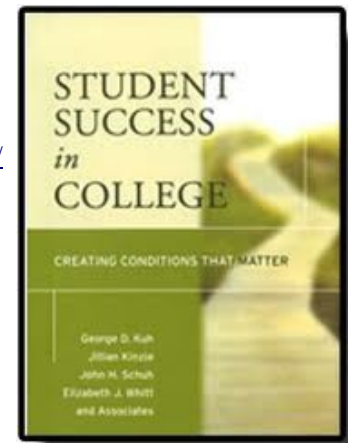
On the worst days – when you've met with too many "It isn't my responsibility" students – you do want to stick sharp pencils in your eye. But on the best days, which are far more numerous, you have the chance to help students unsure they can be successful at anything recognize that, with the right skills and self-discipline, they can succeed at *just about everything*. It doesn't get much better than that.

— Continued from Page 2

Perhaps the most important item on the Next Steps Center for the successful implementation of a one day orientation is the ability for students to change their major up to seven business days before their scheduled session (or at the point of matriculation and fall term activation for students who change dates or are a part of the New Start program). Students can opt to change their major into any available option for an incoming student. For the vast majority of majors at UA this process is automatic, and is immediately reflected in the students profile in UAccess. Students wishing to change into the Colleges of Architecture, Engineering, Fine Arts or Nursing will be provided with a prompt indicating they must fill out an additional review form as warranted by those colleges. Additionally, students attempting to change out of those colleges will receive a similar prompt letting them know that they will not be able to change back to those programs without review.

New for 2012, all parents who register for New Student Orientation are provided with a link to log into the Parent Essentials website. This website was designed to be a one stop resource for Wildcat families; a Next Steps Center for parents, complete with important dates, pre and post orientation to do lists and information to help the families of our participants get ready for orientation. Parents and family members who register to participate in orientation will receive the link to the Parent Essentials website in the confirmation emails sent one month in advance of their program.

New Student Services will once again host the Orientation All Campus Review on May 7 and 8, time to be determined (we will send a notice via the UPAAC listserv). These meetings will provide a preview of the upcoming season and provide any last minute updates. We have also done a major upgrade to the orientation website (<http://orientation.arizona.edu/welcome-new-students>) and to the orientation FAQ s (<http://orientation.arizona.edu/frequently-asked-questions>) to include more information regarding the program for students and their families. Please take a look around and let us know what you think. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 520-621-6123 or email at ra-beech@email.arizona.edu.



Degree Tracker News

By: Shelley McGrath

IT projects are a strange animal from an advising perspective (trust me, I know). Projects are required to have names and ultimately so do the products we develop. Degree Tracker is a project that encompasses the development and implementation of two products: Degree Search and Smart Planner. Degree Search is a website that replaced the former online viewbook. The Smart Planner has been known as Degree Tracker up to this point, because we did not have a name for the product yet. You may hear Smart Planner and Degree Tracker used interchangeably out in the advising community, because the project name and product name were the same until recently. For clarification, Smart Planner is the same product we have been developing since the beginning of the Degree Tracker project—it merely has a name now. On page 5 is a diagram that should help clear up any potential confusion:

Developmental counseling or advising is concerned not only with a specific personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness, and problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills. Not only are these *advising* functions but, deriving from the above assumptions, they are essentially *teaching* functions as well.

Burns B. Crookston, 1972



Project
Degree Tracker

The name of this project is Degree Tracker and the team is producing two products: Degree Search and Smart Planner

The **Smart Planner** (formerly called Degree Tracker) is a new product within UAccess that will allow students and advisors to map and track progress toward their degree in ways that make sense to end users.

Product 1
Degree Search

Product 2
Smart Planner

X

Data
PeopleSoft

Degree Search is a website that allows prospective, transfer, and current students to explore majors at UA. Degree Search has replaced the old online viewbook.

Degree Search and **Smart Planner** do not interact with each other; however, the data for each product are housed within PeopleSoft.