

## End of Year Report of the Advisement and Registration Council for 2011-2012

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The A & R Council had another productive year addressing the standing and additional charges. We met with representatives from Registration Services, the Career Development and Advisement Center, Information Systems, and the Department of Languages and Cultures to update and reorganize the advising support materials in WPConnect. We presented the new Advising tab to the Faculty Senate on January 24. We also proposed a resolution to the Faculty Senate to move the declaration of minor to an online process.

***Standing Charges:*** *1. Review advisement and registration policies and procedures, and recommend revisions and/or new policies as needed for both undergraduate and graduate processes.*

*2. Identify problems and recommend means for improvement in advisement and registration procedures.*

*3. Work with administrators involved in areas of Advisement and Registration to recommend ways to facilitate policy implementation.*

In addition to the implementation of the advisor tab (see below), we also pursued the moving of the declaration of a minor to an online process. We met with Nina Trelisky of the Registration Services, Sharon Rosengart of the Career Development and Advisement Center, and Joe Alaya of Information Systems to discuss the process. All were in agreement that an online process of minor declaration, mirroring the process of the online declaration of a major, would be beneficial. However, after receiving some mixed feedback, informal and formal, from Department chairs about whether or not they would want to approve the students' minor declaration as they currently do for the major, the A & R Council decided to separate the process into two steps. The current paper declaration of minor does not require Department Chair approval, so mirroring the declaration of major with Chair approval would constitute a policy change. With the school year ending, we decided to take this up next year. To start the process, we submitted the following resolution:

Whereas the present system for declaring a minor requires that a student go the Advisement Center and fill out a paper form; and Whereas the present system for declaring a major is now done entirely online; and Whereas it would be preferable if students were able to declare a minor online; and Whereas it would be useful for Chairs of departments to be informed as to the numbers and identities of minors in their departments; The Advisement and Registration Council of the Faculty Senate proposes that the Faculty Senate request that the administration change the current system of applying for a minor to mirror the current online system of declaring a major, with one difference: that the Chairs continue to be informed through WPU Connect of students enrolled in a minor in their department, but not be required to approve new minors online, as they do currently for every new major.

The Council will look into the possibility of Chair approval for minors in fall 2012.

***Additional Charges for 2011-2012:***

*1. Evaluation of new advising system including faculty and student input; work with Advisement Center and other relevant office to insure all degree programs and majors are accurate.*

On April 9, Glen Sherman, Associate Vice President and Dean of Student Development, submitted and presented a three-page report to the A & R Council on the new freshman advising model. In addition to other useful information, Sherman reported that 90% of the students surveyed were "Very Satisfied" with their advisement sessions (with an additional 8% reporting they were "Moderately Satisfied"). The A & R Council encouraged Sherman to share this report with the entire faculty senate in fall 2012.

*2. Continue to work with the UCC Council and campus offices on faculty development to meet student advisement needs*

*3. Follow up on recommendations made during 2010-2011.*

Last year, the Advisement and Registration Council administered a survey of faculty advisors. We received close to 70% (69.74%) response rate. Based on these results, the Council authored a set of recommendations for improving advising at WPU. The co-Chairs, Thomas Fallace and Esther Martinez, presented the report to the Faculty Senate in spring 2011. As part of this report, we issued the following recommendation:

1. That a first-tier "Advising" tab be created in WPCONNECT that would include information from any and all University sources having to do with advisement and/or registration.

To follow up on this, in summer 2011, the A & R council sent out an email to all advisors explaining our plans for creating an advisor tab and requested suggestions for links, documents, and resources to be included in this tab. We received about a dozen responses. In fall 2011, the results were compiled and discussed with the A & R Council, Nina Trelisky of the Registration Services, Sharon

Rosengart of the Career Development and Advisement Center, Brian Fanning of Information Systems, and Gladys Scott from the Department of Languages and Cultures. Based on all of this feedback, the Council worked with Brian Fanning and Vladimir Pichardo to design a functional and convenient layout for the tab. The co-Chairs, Thomas Fallace and Esther Martinez, presented the tab to the Faculty Senate on January 24. The advisor tab was made available to all faculty members on February 15, 2012. The links on the new tab centralize the existing links found under the various other tabs in WPU Connect. The Advisement and Registration Council will request that it be charged with keeping the advisor tab up to date and with adding relevant links and announcements when appropriate.

We also made changes to the reporting system of the foreign language requirement. After consultation with Nina Trelisky of the Registrar's Office, Sharon Rosengart of the Career Development and Advisement Center, and Dr. Gladys Scott, Placement Coordinator of the Department of Languages and Cultures, the Council recommended that the wording recently added to the Degree Audit concerning the foreign language requirement be further clarified and made more specific. These changes are still pending. Dr. Scott agreed that the then-current information page posted by the Department of Languages and Literatures needed to be made more user-friendly. The current page has been simplified and broken up into several pages, to which the initial page directs the advisor/ student depending on the specific information they may be seeking. The Council and Dr. Scott agree that it would be desirable to effectively block students from registering for classes below their placement level, or who have not taken the placement test, through the registration process, but the system does not allow it. The Department has expended major efforts this year to giving placement tests to all students who registered for basic Spanish and French classes without being placed and to reassigning students registered below their appropriate placement level. There is now a direct link to the Foreign Language Requirement site on the new Advisor Tab.

### ***Suggested Charges for 2012-2013***

1. *Investigate the possibility of the declaration of minor issue to fully mirror the process of online declaration of major with Chair approval*
2. *Follow through on the other recommendations made in 2011 based on the survey of faculty advisors that were not addressed. These include:*
  - That the University evaluate whether the Office of the Registrar is adequately staffed; staff should be able to answer and return phone calls during registration periods, update the degree audits more quickly, and deal with other emerging advising and data entry issues in a timely manner;
  - That the University further develop and support a more consistent program of advisor training and support. Some suggested elements of such a program:

- Hold initial training sessions for full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and staff advisors on the model of Blackboard and WAC training sessions;
- holding sessions long enough (half or full days) to cover all the necessary relevant material and allow for some hands-on learning via case studies; cover all university- and College-wide aspects of advising in initial training sessions;
- include hands-on case studies; have participation be compensated (as for Blackboard and WAC Institutes);
- train new advisees before the beginning of their first semester as advisors;
- hold sessions on specific topics; monthly ITE-style sessions;
- re-establish a corps of Master Advisors within each College who would be qualified to act as a resource to other advisors in their College; compensate them;
- provide for exchange of information between departments of a College on major, minor and certification program requirements;
- provide and maintain, with updates when necessary, a comprehensive on-line Advisors' Manual, and also issue a brief (10 to 20 pages) printed "digest" of updated resources and information related to advising each year. This resource would include basic advising information and draw attention to recently added changes and resources;
- That the University, Colleges, and, Departments make an effort to maintain the same assignments of advisees to a specific advisor throughout a student's career;
- That Deans and Department Chairs coordinate the dissemination of timely information on their specific programs and majors within their own Colleges and to other departments and Colleges on a consistent basis. A revived system of Master Advisors (see #3) may be of assistance in this effort;
- That incoming students be trained/ informed, during orientation or (for transfer students) when they are accepted for admission, about the registration and advisement process, what to expect and what is expected of them.
- That students be given some explanatory materials or "road maps" in their packets and that advisors receive a copy of these materials.