

**Academic Advisement Council**  
**May 8, 2007 Meeting**  
**President's Conference Room**  
**1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Present:** A. Heaston (Chair), M. Aviles, C. Boles, V. Burden, E. Griffis, M. Hale, V. Jones, J. Kemp, V. Miller, E. Murkison, C. Thompson, L. Vance, and C. Griffith (Recorder)

**Guest:** S. Engel

## **1. Advisement**

Enrollment updates were distributed comparing Summer 2006 enrollments to Summer 2007 and Fall 2006 to Fall 2007. Of particular note: summer enrollments are up over 800 students. The increase can be attributed, in large part, to two factors: (1) the adjusted GPA policy change, and (2) a new marketing ploy to push summer enrollments as a retention strategy.

Numbers for the fall are also up—over 680 students so far and incoming freshmen have yet to register. Retention numbers are excellent thanks in large part to the efforts of the advisors.

### **SOAR Training and Preparation**

#### **College Advisement Kick-Off Meetings and Pre-SOAR Session Meetings**

**Purpose:** To be used as a means for ensuring that each college advisement team is on message and well-prepared for SOAR.

**Schedules & Agendas:** **Working with the associate deans, coordinators develop a 2-page summary to share with the Associate Provost, including (1) the kick-off meeting agenda; (2) each pre-SOAR session meeting agenda; and (3) the schedules for the kick-off meeting and each pre-SOAR session meeting.**

Marilyn Hale reported on a successful CLASS kick-off meeting and shared with the coordinators the binder she prepared for her advisement team. Included in the binder was college-specific information needed to advise CLASS majors.

#### **Academic College Sessions/Advisement and First Year**

Coordinators should be cognizant of the difference between the academic college sessions at one-day SOARs versus two-day SOARs. Essentially, the academic college session at the one-day SOAR sessions is the advisement and first year information. Keep in mind also that since there are multiple SOAR sessions, colleges have room to make improvements as needed. To facilitate assessment of these sessions, Vince Miller agreed to share the academic college session evaluations with coordinators after the first SOAR.

## Advisement and Registration

Each college advisement team should map out a strategy in advance for handling the advisement and registration sessions so that all of their students can be effectively advised and registered by the 4 p.m. deadline.

## SOAR FYIs

1. Vince Miller distributed the change of major station sign-up sheet. At this station, students will also be asked to complete a change of major form which will allow them to skip the advisement line at SOAR and advance directly to the desk where they can obtain a degree evaluation.
2. Vince reported that Admissions is planning on about 175 students at the first SOAR, although only 120 students have signed up thus far.
3. **Vince requested that coordinators send him all of the names of their early transfer advisees by Thursday at noon.** Meeting this deadline will enable him to prepare Golden Tickets for these students so that they can be released from the advisement sessions at SOAR.
4. Jody Kemp distributed a handout showing the information that students will receive at SOAR.
5. Following a discussion of who should be printing the degree evaluation on transfer students who have been early advised, coordinators agreed to be responsible for printing this information and bringing it to SOAR. Admissions will only print degree evaluations for transfers admitted after Thursday, 5 p.m.
6. Walk-ins at SOAR will be identified by having grey sheets instead of blue. These sheets will need to be collected by the college teams so that work-ups can be done on the students.
7. Coordinators can pick up lists of walk-ins and change of majors after their college advisement sessions. This information will be available at the information desk.

## SOAR A

Steve Engel distributed information on the University Honors Program and explained that SOAR A will be reserved strictly for high-ability students (those with SAT scores above 1200 and high GPAs). He asked advisors to structure their messages to these students accordingly:

1. students should be encouraged to take a full, challenging academic load;
2. students should not register for Healthful Living in the fall (they can pick it up in the spring);
3. students with AP credit pending should register for the higher level class (they can always drop back later if necessary—colleges will need to follow-up after SOAR on AP scores and student registrations);
4. students should be registering for the 2 credit hour honors orientation course (extra credit counts toward free elective); and
5. students should be registering for 3 honors classes.

Steve will send out the list of honors courses no later than May 9<sup>th</sup>. A week before each SOAR session, he will also forward an updated SOAR list. Keep in mind that SOAR A will now be a smaller session (anticipated 235 to 275 students versus 375).

## Transfer Early Advisement

The Transfer Early Advisement Status handout was distributed. Amy Heaston thanked the coordinators/advisors for their efforts and commended the team on a 180 degree turn-around since January.

To standardize the forthcoming transfer early advisement reports, coordinators were asked to share the following information in two separate reports (one for summer; one for fall):

- total number transfer students admitted
- number transfer students signed-up for SOAR
- number transfer students early advised
- percentage transfer students early advised of those admitted
- number of appointments in the pipeline with transfer students for early advisement
- number of folders created

While it is recognized that a 100% conversion rate is not going to be realized, the goal is for colleges to attain 100% preparation. Current projections place freshmen transfers at 150 students and upper-class transfers at 750. With these numbers, it is not feasible to plan on doing total advisement at SOAR.

In response to a question on how GTREPs are handled, it was noted that ultimately colleges (coordinators working with associate deans) need to be responsible for ensuring that their students receive timely and effective advisement and are able to register in a timely fashion. Colleges are responsible for ensuring that no bottlenecks occur at SOAR and will be held accountable accordingly; however colleges have flexibility in how they decide to handle this matter.

The importance of early transfer advisement was reiterated as a retention strategy. Students are favorably impressed when colleges are proactive in contacting them soon after admittance, advise them, and pre-register them for critical courses.

Finally, coordinators were reminded that they need to track transfer students who were early advised but failed to show up at SOAR. [After the meeting, an email was circulated on how advisors might initially contact transfer students to encourage them to sign-up for a SOAR session.] For those transfer students who do not attend a SOAR session, their registration for any critical courses will need to be dropped. The same holds true of any students who change a major after receiving early advisement.

## GSU 1210/1220

Ellen Murkison distributed Fall GSU 120 by the Numbers and a list of First-Year Seminar Pilots. She noted that GSU 1220 is the First-Year Seminar and is reserved solely for honors students. This course is 2 credit hours and is designed to engage honors students with a faculty member on a subject of mutual interest. GSU 1220 will fulfill the GSU 1210 requirement since the lab portion of GSU 1220 covers the same information as that in GSU 1210.

At this point in the meeting, there was a brief interlude while Amy thanked the group for all of their hard work and effort during the past year. Each member received a centennial pin and was toasted. Amy noted that people's view of advisement on campus is changing largely due to this group. The coordinators also thanked Amy for her leadership and guidance over the past year.

It was suggested that a celebration be held following the final SOAR in August to commemorate all of the hard work.

## 2. Presentation on CLASS and CIT Majors

Marilyn Hale reported on CLASS majors, sharing a handout describing the CLASS advisement center, its mission, the students served, and lists of potential careers for each major. She also noted particular courses that students should register for early on if they are interested in certain majors.

Maria Aviles distributed a handout on CIT majors, noting the differentiation between each of the three majors. In particular, Computer Science requires strong math skills and attention to details. It is a lot of coding. Information Systems graduates serve more as liaisons between the technical support people and businesses. Information Technology involves more technical skills: networking, website development. Finally, she noted that Computer Engineering (which is in COST) focuses on the hardware of the computer versus the software.

## 3. Advisement Updates

Chris Thompson reported on the NACADA webinar "Student Learning Outcomes: Evidence of Teaching and Learning Components of Academic Advisement." Basic concepts elicited in the webinar:

- reinforced advising as teaching;
- focus on "what do we want students to get out of advisement?"
- need for consensus on campus as to what advisement is;
- discussion of developing a curriculum for advising;
- use of evidence to show what advisors are doing well and what could be improved (reinforced necessity of advisement centers systematically collecting data);
- potential for developing an advisement syllabus—sets academic tone;
  - what information should the student learn through advisement (e.g., rules, procedures)
  - what skills should the student learn through advisement (e.g., responsibility)
  - what cognitive/developmental changes should the student be able to demonstrate through advising.

Each webinar is a one-time \$125 registration fee. The next webinar is June 12, 2007: "Expanding Your Comfort Zone: Strategies for Developing and Demonstrating Cultural Competence in Academic Advising" with Blane Harding.

The Council expressed interest in hosting one or more sessions during the forthcoming academic year and possibly even exploring contacting NACADA for consultant recommendations on a particular topic they might like to explore (e.g., developing student outcomes, syllabus, curriculum). This topic will be placed on the agenda of the first fall meeting for further discussion.

## 4. Topics for Follow-Up

There were no topics for follow-up, but a question was raised on whether the other centers collect data on why students leave their colleges, where they go, and who is leaving. Most centers indicated that they did collect these data.

## 5. For the Good of the Order

### First Year Experience Task Force

The Recommendations of the First Year Experience Task Force were distributed. This Task Force was created to answer the question: “How do we infuse academics back into the first year experience?” The recommendations have been vetted through Deans Council, Enrollment Management Council, and President’s Cabinet. All of these councils endorsed the recommendations. Funding options are now being explored.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Freshmen Seminars (discussed above). The freshmen seminars are being piloted Fall 2007 with the honors population to see how effective they are in engaging students. Long-term implementation will depend upon the assessment of the fall pilot study plus funding—necessary to compensate two instructors instead of one.
2. Turning Points will be revitalized as a Global Connections course with responsibility shared equally throughout all of the colleges. Again, faculty compensation is an issue that will need to be worked out. Ideally, students will take the freshmen seminar in the fall and the Global Connections course in the spring.
3. The Task Force is also in the final stages of producing a brochure modeled after the PRISM brochure: “Welcome to Georgia Southern University: Are you ready for the challenge?” This brochure describes what it takes to be successful on campus and will be mailed to all incoming fall admits over the summer. *A question was raised on whether this mailing will include a welcome letter or if colleges should plan on sending their own letters. The brochure will not be mailed with a welcome letter; the welcome is embedded in the brochure.*
4. Conversations with Professors will now be the academic kick-off for students. This session will be held on the Sunday before classes from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Ellen shared a handout describing the logistics behind the session. The First Year Experience Office will register students for the class at SOAR. It is mandatory; students cannot drop it. The First Year Experience Office will also track attendance at these sessions and will communicate to the appropriate advisement center those students who do not attend. Advisors should treat this information as a potential **red flag** for at-risk students.
5. Midterm grades—the Task Force has recommended that a button be added to the midterm grade report that would allow faculty to provide additional information (optional) as to the reason behind the grade (e.g., not attending class).
6. The Task Force has also recommended limiting the number of withdrawals a student may have over the course of his or her academic career. This recommendation has been referred to the Deans Council for action.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Fall 2007 semester—to be scheduled.