

**Academic Advisement Council**  
**September 14, 2006 Meeting**  
**Marvin Pittman Administration Building, Room 2002**  
**1 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Present:** A. Heaston (Chair), M. Aviles, M. Boyd, V. Burden, C. Caplinger, E. Griffis, M. Hale, D. Kittrell-Mikell, V. Miller, B. Williams, and C. Griffith (Recorder)

**Guest:** M. Hazeldine

## **1. Welcome/Introductions**

Dr. Heaston opened the meeting, noting the change in the composition of the Academic Advisement Council from a combination of associate deans and professional advisors to professional advisors and other professional staff. The professional advisors will share the meeting discussions with their staff and their direct reports. The associate deans will be apprised of the Council's discussions and actions by receiving copies of the meeting minutes. Guests are always welcome.

Dr. Heaston further noted that the meeting structure has been changed to place greater emphasis on, and discussion of, pertinent issues facing the advisement centers and advisement process.

## **2. *Many Advisors, One Message*** **The Georgia Southern Message**

What does advisement mean at Georgia Southern University?
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While there was consensus in the value of having a single message communicated across all units, it became apparent that Georgia Southern does not have a common advisement message or a universal advisement mission. Such a message does not preclude individual advisement centers from having their own mission statements or unique discipline-related advisement strategies so long as those align with the University's central advisement message.

1. All advisors should tell students that the advisement center is their first stop for all advisement-related questions. This message can be articulated at SOAR, followed-up in GSU 1210, and continued in the advisement centers.
2. Advising is teaching.

### **Proactive and Creative Advisement Practices**

1. All advisement centers need to post on their website four-year plan of studies for each major as well as updated course rotation schedules. Four year plan of studies and updated course rotation schedules are developed by the programs. Students need to be aware of the availability and use of these documents, and they need to be

incorporated into all advisement decisions. Students can be made aware of these documents by using them at SOAR, in GSU 1210, and in the advisement centers.

2. Advisement centers need to consider the physical environment and how it facilitates or hinders effective advisement.
3. Advisors need to consider parents as part of the advisement process during SOAR to ensure that they are hearing the same message as students as well as being educated about the core curriculum.
4. Advisement centers need to consider follow-up strategies. One example given is checking student registrations after SOAR to be sure they registered for the appropriate courses. If a student registered for a class that is inappropriate, the student should be contacted and told what class he or she should be registered for.
5. Training needs to be developed for faculty and professional advisors. Colleges need to make this a priority.
6. Advisement centers need to consider different approaches to advisement. One example is the hybrid advisement model proposed for the COST advisement center. In COST, the student's first 60 credits will be advised through the advisement center after which the student will be assigned a faculty advisor in the major. Faculty advisors self-identify. Students must meet with their advisors at least twice per semester.
7. Advisement centers need to utilize various tools for effective advising such as the Degree Evaluation program. Students need to be alerted as to the availability of this tool at SOAR, in GSU 1210, and through the advisement centers. All change of major requests should be initiated first by the student employing Degree Evaluation to develop progression scenarios then followed-up by speaking with an advisor.
8. Associate deans need to have cross-college conversations with their counterparts to ensure that needed courses in the core will be offered.
9. Advisors need to be more proactively intrusive in communicating with students about course withdrawal decisions. For instance, advisors should be approaching students with information on what the student needs to do to be successful in the course, discouraging withdrawals unless it is obvious that the student cannot possibly succeed.
10. Advisors need to monitor early alerts to identify students at risk and intervene to help them succeed.
11. Advisors need to play a greater role in the overall advisement process.
12. Faculty and administrators need to be involved in the advisement process. It is especially critical to involve associate deans in the process to build the necessary support structure for meaningful change.

### 3. AYR 2006-07 Opportunities

#### Role in Campus Initiatives, RPG

There is a campus-wide, and at the system-level, a perception that advisement is broken. Advisement, especially at Georgia Southern, is under the spotlight which presents an opportunity to effect meaningful change.

How can advisement be a positive force in RPG?

- Early alerts—identify risk factors
  - a. Student attendance
  - b. Mid-term grades (It was noted that as currently structured mid-term grades do not provide enough information and what is provided comes too late. The Enrollment Management Council is looking at mid-term grades this year.)
  - c. Track the number of course withdrawals
  - d. Track the number of change of majors
  - e. Monitor GPAs—any dip puts a student at risk

#### Early Advisement

The University has mandated that all advisement centers will practice early advisement.

How can advisors make early advisement work?

#### Assignment for next meeting:

1. Advisors need to identify any other issues impeding effective implementation of early advisement (in addition to those articulated in the handout) and come to the October meeting prepared to discuss resolutions.
2. Advisors need to have a conversation with their respective associate dean to advise them that the Academic Advisement Council will be discussing this topic. (The associate deans will be discussing this topic as well at their September meeting with the Associate Provost.)

Council needs to investigate early registration options to ensure that transfer students get enrolled for high demand courses. Is there a way of making early registration feasible at the time of the advisement meeting with the student?

#### Assessment Tool

Council needs to identify a common tool for evaluating the advisement process across campus.

1. Deborah Kittrell-Mikell will share the student survey conducted in the CHHS advisement center.
2. Bobbie Williams will share any information gleaned from the COBA peer institution survey which relates to evaluation of advisement.
3. Candace Griffith will conduct a survey of USG system institutions.

## 4. Advisement Updates

### **CLASS and COST Advisement Centers**

Marilyn Hale and Dr. Boyd provided updates on the CLASS and COST advisement centers. Both are implementing a hybrid approach utilizing professional and faculty advisors.

### **FYE and Undeclared Advisement**

There are currently 835 undeclared majors. Dr. Caplinger reported that FYE will now be responsible for advising all undeclared freshmen, accepting this new role from the former Academic Advisement Center. He further noted several strategies that are being employed to ensure that freshmen declare majors by the end of their first year.

1. Dedicated GSU 1210 sections are being offered for undeclared majors, and instructors of those sections will advise their students.
2. FYE is monitoring the students to see when in the process they declare a major.
3. FYE will be following-up with the students in the spring semester to ensure that a decision is made.
4. The message freshmen are receiving is that being an undeclared major is a “developmental process” not a parking spot.

The Council members discussed the importance of sending the correct message at SOAR for undeclared majors regarding the core curriculum. It is strongly recommended that students pursue a course of study on a topic that they might be leaning towards and select the appropriate core courses.

### **Undeclared Post-Baccalaureate, Transient Student, and Accel Student Advisement**

Velma Burden provided an update on the advisement of these groups of students. The Registrar’s Office is assuming this responsibility from the former Academic Advisement Center. Tifani Pool will be the contact. Velma also noted that RANS will now automatically populate in Banner once a student has registered for courses. This improvement will prevent students from having to seek out their advisors if they have forgotten their RAN.

## 5. Topics for Follow-Up

### *After the Freshman Bubble Pops*

This article was distributed for discussion at the October meeting.

### **Early Advisement**

### **Degree Evaluation**

How we can better utilize this tool?
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## 6. For the Good of the Order

Dr. Heaston recognized and thanked Marilyn Hale for her efforts on behalf of the advisement process in the ongoing transitions.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** October 12, 2006, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Marvin Pittman Administration Building, Room 2002

### **Academic Advisement Council's 2006-07 Action Plan:**

- 1. Develop a central university advisement message.**
  - **Articulate an implementation strategy for conveying this message to all parents and students as well as other constituencies in the advisement process.**
- 2. Reach consensus on implementation strategies for early advisement.**
- 3. Agree on implementation strategies for utilizing degree evaluation.**
- 4. Post programs of studies and course rotations for all majors on advisement centers' websites.**
- 5. Develop a toolkit of indicators to identify at-risk students.**
  - **Reach consensus on the appropriate use for each tool.**
  - **Strategize intrusive advisement practices to enable at-risk students to succeed.**
- 6. Identify common assessment tool(s) for evaluating the advisement process at Georgia Southern.**