

The Advising Center: Assessing the Present, Planning the Future June 14th 2006

A "Pathways to Success" model identifying distinct advising practicum and initiatives for freshmen and transfers was created and has been implemented in the on-going advisement and interventions performed by the Center.

The Advising Center continues to work closely with FYI to ensure maximum student participation in freshman learning communities; 100% of registration into FYI communities occurs through mandatory Freshman Advising with the assistance of "peer-to-peer" advising (i.e., trained FYI mentors and Advising Center Student Advising Assistants assist with all Freshman Workshops).

Freshman Planning Workshops (during the new student's first semester), in coordination with FYI, encourage new students to enter a major-based community, thereby allowing for a connection between students, early in their college careers through "gateway to the major" courses, and faculty through specially-designed communities (ex: pre-med, education and business communities and FYI's "reacting" classes).

The Advising Center coordinates with faculty to register students into special courses (i.e. Sue Goldhaber's and Ann Davison's English 110 and World Studies 101 dyad; Jamie Bianco's special technology enhanced English 110 course).

In a move to integrate WAC into the Advising process and the articulation of college general education requirements, the Advising Center's director is an ex-officio member of WISC/WAC Committee; this allows for clear lines of communication and information; WAC information is linked to the Advising Center's website.

With the coordination of WIC/WAC and Advising, a clearer, more uniform message regarding the College's composition requirements through new-student orientation and individual advising sessions, and the creation of a widely-distributed document identifying College's writing intensive courses and, if applicable, the additional requirements they fulfill.

Working on Outcomes

In order to assess the effectiveness of new student programs, the Advising Center in collaboration with Student Affairs has redesigned the Freshman Orientation student satisfaction survey and the parents' orientation satisfaction survey.

The Center will develop a 'Review of Services' form to ascertain the satisfaction of students who utilize walk-in and appointment services. In the future, the Center will examine an on-line student satisfaction survey tool, "Survey Monkey" to see if this automated tabulation program can be of assistance to the work of the Center.

The Center will develop a survey to assess new transfer student satisfaction, issues, and needs that will be distributed at transfer advising workshops.

The Center will generate and review data compiled from the annual graduation progress checks for students with 75+ credits, which number approximately 3400. (The annual academic auditing project of students' records of 75 or more completed credits allows for the individual assessment of college requirements and the communication thereof to students; it additionally supplies much information with regard to the completeness of college requirements on a categorical basis. This process has proven helpful in the institution's review of general education requirements and section offerings—especially with regard to the development and eventual implementation of a new general education curriculum. This project has proven to have merit within the Center; it has also been established as an important institutional assessment tool; therefore, the Center will attempt to continue this project though it is extremely time consuming.

The Center will research senior CUNY colleges for information on their Advising structures and new-student programs for the purposes of learning of and incorporating CUNY's best practices into its programming.

The Center will institute data collection and mining for the purposes of self-study, and intra-college accounts will continue and be further developed in an effort to provide more comprehensive information on the students it serves.

This includes the collection of data on our continuing student volume for academic semester advising services and special programming initiatives (including the Sophomore Milestones and the 2nd-semester Freshman Registration Planning Workshops), as well as its new student services, which include freshman and transfer orientation and advising programs. (Academic 2005-2006 marks the first time that continuing student volume statistics for regular walk-in and appointment advising services have been gathered, assessed, and distributed; such documentation of the usage by students of our advising services affirmed our belief that we indeed cater to a very large number of the College's undergraduates.)

The Advising Center would like to expand their review and assessment to include ACE and Weekend College advising services separate from their current data, which includes these students among the continuing student cohort.

Technology

The director of the Advising Center is a member of the project team to bring web-aided advising to the campus (expected rollout fall 2006).

The Advising Center staff has already begun piloting Degree Works in its advisement of continuing students and is serving as a mechanism through which the program is corrected, tweaked and changed to ready it for rollout. It will streamline the Progress Check Initiative Project (Degree Audit) through Degree Works.

- Work closely with the Degree Works Project coordinator to serve as a driving force to bring web-aided advising to the campus (student training workshops for usage of program)
- Re-design the Advising Center's website for College-wide use and reference
- Provide public/student access to computers in Advising Center for the purposes of transcript review, usage of DegreeWorks, registration, change of program, etc.
- Provide published versions of its Majors Handbook, Academic Policies Handbook, Freshman Advising Handbook, LASAR menus and Writing Courses on its website.
- Increase the updating and frequency of such publications, including a new, more user-friendly Majors Book, which will include discipline descriptions and definitions, as well as more information on career connectedness.
- Work with OCT to have an automatic "Hit" counter added to determine the number of visits the site gets on a daily basis.
- Provide CPE information via handouts, in advising sessions, a link on the Center's website, and in the new student workshop power point presentations.

Improve Student Success

The College has fostered a collaboration between the Advising Center and Student Affairs in the recruitment and orientation of undergraduates via the Orientation Committee formed in December 2005.

The Orientation Committee brought together its student workers for pre-workshop training sessions. The Advising Center continues to do on-going student advising assistant training sessions and an internal "mentoring" program for its graduate student advisors.

An e-mail distribution list has been created to keep directors and staff in advising-related capacities in contact and kept abreast of changes in academics, policies, and procedures, so as to share information and develop uniformity in message.

The College continues to improve academic advising through the use of the Pathways to Success model and is actively identifying and reporting problematic points for students via interventions, including English 110 intervention; CESL transition program; undeclared majors intervention; unevaluated transfer credit intervention; academic progress check intervention; English 110/Primary College Competency Intervention; pre-registration of identified students into this basic skills course and on-going progression analysis each semester.

The Advising Center in collaboration with the Provost's Office is working closely with high-demand departments to ensure availability of seats in major courses for incoming transfer students via Transfer Class Reservation Program and Faculty-Assisted Workshops.

The Center continuously identifies and monitors "gateway to the major" and bottlenecked courses that impede students' progress in general education and in majors as academic changes are made to these areas via the Academic Senate.

The Center implemented new initiatives for sophomore students during academic year 2005 – 2006, including a Sophomore Kickoff program with faculty participation in September 2005 to welcome students to their sophomore year through sophomore advising weeks and "Milestones" workshops that were offered during fall and spring semesters.

The expansion of the Sophomore Initiative Program will include:

- Outreach letter at beginning of semester from sophomore coordinator
- Majors exploration workshops to include faculty and declared upperclassmen as speakers
- Mentoring program connecting sophomores with upperclassmen in majors in which they are interested, as well as faculty mentoring
- Creation of "Sophomore Site" on our website where students can get information, connect to department pages, or e-mail the sophomore coordinator.

Improve College Readiness

In conjunction with Academic Support, incoming freshmen and transfers attend new student advising workshops and are advised and registered for readiness (i.e., CESL) courses. First and second semester CESL students are transitioned into QC content courses, including English 110, after the passing of the ACT tests.

There is an on-going referral by advisors to support services, including content course tutoring, reading, writing, math, science and language labs. The Center maintains support service materials in our student-accessed information area and on our website.

The Center coordinates with the College Now Program via its orientation program to introduce current high school students to College, post-secondary expectations, and the notion of a liberal arts education

Improve Student Satisfaction

Through the QC CUE Council, the Center will create an Advising Consortium to include all vestiges of advising-related support and student service offices (initiated by SEEK Associate Director, Tom Gibson; co-chaired by Advising Center director).

The Center will facilitate with the International Student Service Office a closer coordination of foreign transfer students and transfer credit evaluation. In an effort to improve services for students with foreign credentials, an assessment initiative is planned

to review the data of these students who attend transfer workshops and to work more closely with International Student Services to determine more effective and expeditious ways to evaluate foreign credit.

The Center will compile and provide information on graduate school admissions tests and graduate school advising for students transitioning from QC to graduate school.

The Center will work toward greater on-campus coordination of the CUNY Baccalaureate program and its on-campus recruitment by bringing representatives to campus for workshops.

ACE advising will take place entirely in The Advising Center in order to simplify and make the process more accessible.

The Advising Center will maintain its presence at Major/Minor Fairs.

The Center will introduce "pre-PLAS" (Queens College's new general education curriculum expected Fall 2009) "Synthesis" courses to currently-enrolled Queens College students.

The Center will closely coordinate with Weekend College Advising, including instituting extended weekend availability. It will train, monitor, and closely collaborate with the new Weekend College advisor who will serve one day and evening a week in the Advising Center.

The Center will attempt to offer new transfer student advising workshops on select weekends in the summer.