

DATE: March 29, 2012
TO: Provost Minner
FROM: English 306 Student
SUBJECT: A Proposal for Better Academic Advising
Cc: Rick Van Noy, CIO

Project Summary

After talking with other students about their academic advising experience, I have witnessed the ineffectiveness of the current method used to guide students through their first few years of college. They are not told of the many opportunities a few extra classes may offer, such as adding a minor or another major, or what classes may be more helpful with their future careers. Consequently, students are feeling lost and out of control of their college coursework. I plan to determine the feasibility of implementing mentors and more informed advisors. The report will be completed by April 26, 2012 and will cost approximately \$460.00.

Introduction

Since I have come to the university I have experienced and heard of the inadequate academic advising program. Working as the Academic Achievement Chair for my sorority I realized that academic advising is a bigger problem than I had first thought. This inadequacy is due to a lack of knowledge of courses or willingness to help students. Students are expected to listen to what the advisors tell them, but are not informed of more than the bare minimum. Poor academic advising results in unmotivated, uninformed, and unsuccessful students. By researching and interviewing people involved with advising, as well as researching other universities academic advising programs, I will determine the possibility of implementing a mentor program and more training for advisors. This proposal outlines my plan for the feasibility study stated above.

Procedures

My proposed plan includes three phases:

- 1) Research
- 2) Analysis
- 3) Writing the Report

1) Research

In order to determine the practicability of mentors and more informed advisors, I will gather information to answer the following questions:

1. How long is the training to be an academic advisor?
2. What are the costs of training and hiring advisors?
3. What is the interest in upper-level students to be an academic mentor?
4. What are the academic advising and mentoring programs of other universities?

I plan to gather my information from several sources. I will interview past and current academic advisors, as well as students. I will research other university academic advising programs on the internet and through phone calls. Dr. Dale Henderson, my academic advisor, will also be included as a source. I will ask Dr. Henderson how he became an academic advisor and what was required. I will also talk to Nasim Schwab, the Advising Coordinator for the College of Business and Economics. In order to determine how the students feel about the current and the possibility of a new program, I will ask students to participate in a survey.

2) Analysis

After conducting research, I will analyze the data that I have collected. I will determine if it is practicable to have a new academic advising program by looking at the success of other programs, the ability to change the current program, and the cost of training advisors. I will also determine whether the new program would make students more comfortable and successful.

3) Writing the Report

After research and analysis, my group will divide information into sections for documentation. We will combine our sections to form a rough draft. From there we will create a unified document, graphics, revise, edit and proofread, and complete our finished product.

Before submitting the final draft, I plan to have people who have no personal connections and interests in successful students read and evaluate this report. Dr. Dale Henderson, my academic advisor, will evaluate my report and I will also ask for your assistance in evaluating my report.

I will evaluate the success of this project, after delivering the final report, by the reaction of my primary readers and those who it is presented to. In order to feel satisfied, the primary readers will have learned new information that will leave them feeling a need to improve the academic advising program.

Schedule

Table 1 provides a detailed schedule for completing each phase of the report.

PHASE DESCRIPTION	COMPLETION DATE	HOURS REQUIRED
Agreement to form group	3/27/2012	2

Research		16 hours:
Contacting other universities	4/8/2012	6
Interviews	4/8/2012	10
Analysis		5 hours:
Determine possibility	4/10/2012	2
Progress Report	4/12/2012	3
Writing		21 hours:
Project outline	4/19/2012	2
Write rough draft	4/20/2012	10
Revise rough draft	4/22/2012	3
Write final draft	4/22/2012	3
Edit and proofread	4/24/2012	2
Bind and submit report	4/26/2012	1
	TOTAL	44

Table 1: Projected Timeline for Proposed Advising Feasibility Study

Staffing/Qualifications

I was the Academic Achievement Chair for my sorority for a year. This leadership experience provides me with group leadership skills that will prove helpful in working as a team to write this report. Along with that I have worked close with incoming students and freshmen through being a Student Admissions Representative. Working with and helping these students I realized how lost many students feel and how the lack of control makes them feel. My experience working with the university has provided me with the understanding I will need in order to accurately determine the feasibility of implicating a better academic advising program. Lastly, I have experience writing reports. Included in my experience is a management analysis.

Cost/Breakdown

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the estimated cost for completing the report.

Time Costs	
Researching other programs	6
Interviewing	10
Analysis	5
Writing the report	21
Total	44 hours x \$10/hour = \$ 440.00
Material Costs	
Telephone calls	\$20.00
Total	\$20.00
Total Costs	\$460.00

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Table 2: Projected Costs for Proposed Advising Feasibility Study

Conclusion

Action needs to be taken to create a better academic advising program in order to ensure that students will be successful in their college career. The current system is neither supportive nor informative to students. By getting the information needed through researching other programs, interviewing students, and interviewing academic advisors a successful resolution can be created and presented in the report. Resolving this problem could increase retention and have more competent students graduate the university. With your approval I will begin research on the proposed project.