

CAS Dean's Council Meeting
Wednesday, October 9, 2013
3:30 – 5:00 p.m. Diffley Board Room

Attendees:

Angela Biselli, Chair of Physics
Jocelyn Boryczka, Chair of Politics
Robbin Crabtree, Dean of College of Arts & Sciences
Nancy Dallavalle, Chair of Religious Studies
Jean Daniele, Assistant to the Dean
Dawn DeBiase, Assistant Dean
Rick Dewitt, Chair of Philosophy
David Gudelunas, Chair of Communication & Co-Director of Women Gender & Sexuality Stud
Manyul Im, CAS Associate Dean
Jereilyn Johnson, Chair of Modern Languages & Literatures
Terry-Ann Jones, Director of International Studies
Suzanna Klaf, Associate Director for the Center of Academic Excellence
Kathy Nantz, Chair of Economics
Laura Nash, Chair of Visual & Performing Arts
Aaron Perkus, CAS Associate Dean
Elizabeth Petrino, Chair of English
Judy Primavera, Chair of Psychology
Kurt Schlichting, Chair of Sociology & Anthropology
Christine Siegel, Associate VP for Academic Affairs
James Simon, CAS Associate Dean
Kraig Steffen, Chair of Chemistry and BioChemistry
Brian Walker, Chair of Biology
Joan Weiss, Chair of Mathematics & Computer Science
Yohuru Williams, Chair of History & Director of Black Studies
Jessica York, Director of Exploratory Academic Advising

Approval of the Minutes

Dr. Nancy Dallavalle moved to approve the September 13, 2013 Dean's Council meeting minutes and Dr. Jocelyn Boryczka seconded the motion. All were in favor of the minutes with one abstention.

CAS Calendar

Dr. Manyul Im setup a CAS calendar in Outlook, which he will be sharing with all department chairs and directors. Dates appearing on the calendar are a duplicate of the Dean's Council calendar created and distributed by Ms. Jean Daniele during the CAS August Chairs' Retreat. The Outlook option is beneficial in that it allows any changes or additions to automatically appear on the CAS calendar. Folks will be able to view the calendar side by side with their own personal Outlook calendar or merge the two calendars together. Anyone needing help with obtaining the CAS calendar could reach out to Dr. Im directly.

Advising

The Dean extended her thanks to the CAS Associate Deans for taking the lead in organizing the October Dean's Council meeting as she was away on an Advancement trip the week prior to our meeting.

Over the past few years, there were conversations relative to faculty/student relationships around student advising. A study was conducted, which clearly indicated that students connected their negative advising experiences largely with the registration process, with a primary concern about receiving their registration PIN numbers and getting into the exact courses they want. Many faculty who participated in that study expressed disappointed in what students were seeking during advising sessions (which was primarily to obtain their registration PIN).

The study raised a level of awareness about registration issues, but also raised issues worth exploring in terms of what the College should seek in advising that maps well with CAS and broader institutional goals. The CAS Associate Deans in collaboration with Ms. Suzanna Klaf organized a workshop around student advising. Also invited were AVP Christine Siegel and Jessica York, Director of Exploratory Academic Advising.

Ms. Klaf facilitated a SWOT analysis to help determine areas of strengths and weaknesses. A SWOT analysis is based on a matrix coming out of business and marketing literature. This analysis is used for strategic planning, determining internal practices that are working, as well as ways to explore opportunities that will help overcome challenges.

Ms. Klaf distributed a SWOT analysis worksheet, asking the group to explore opportunities on how to overcome some advising challenges and to look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and needs within their department. The group worked individually to complete the worksheet, reflecting on advising within their departments and to come back together as a group for discussion.

The following was recorded:

Discussion of Strengths:

- Longitudinal interactions with students (Dr. Yohuru Williams, Chair of History)
- Group Advising Sessions, taking place in late October (Dr. Terry-Ann Jones, Director of International Studies)
- Advising Groups broken into class years (Dr. Judy Primavera, Chair of Psychology Dept.)
- Four year strategizing, including study abroad, internships, and one-on-one advising (Dr. Laura Nash, Chair of VPA)
- Shared responsibility throughout department (Dr. Kathy Nantz, Chair of Economics)
- Committed to intellectual growth (Dr. Nancy Dallavalle, Chair of Religious Studies)
- Individualized and Informal advising (Dr. Elizabeth Petrino, Chair of English)
- Career based advising, grad programs, summer research opportunities (Dr. Joan Weiss, Math/CS)

- Degree evaluations are a helpful tool for advising (Assistant Dean DeBiase)
- Biology has a good student to faculty ratio, having a manageable number of 20 – 25 students (Dr. Brian Walker, Chair of Biology)
- Classroom to Career is helpful (Dr. Williams)
- Health Profession Advisor (Dr. Walker)
- Fairfield tradition is that one size does not fit all (Associate Dean James Simon)
- The faculty are, by and large, deeply caring and deeply knowledgeable, and they are open to students to have broader conversations. There is a breadth and a depth of faculty and staff knowledge that is beneficial to students. (Dean Crabtree)
- Assistant Deans keep an electronic paper trail (Associate Dean Manyul Im)

Discussion of Weaknesses:

- Double majors—hard to advise; need to have another advisor for second major (Dr. Jerelyn Johnson)
- Sheer volume of advising is a weakness; resulting in group sessions (Dr. Primavera)
- Information is not centralized to help with advising (Dr. Kraig Steffen, Chair of Chemistry/BioChemistry)
- Ms. Klaf suggested helping build the portal page.
- Advising is not authentic when students are only interested in obtaining their PIN. Need to decouple obtaining PIN#s with student advising (Dr. Williams)
- A student with a double major only has one “official advisor,” who has the student’s PIN and access to their records. It would be helpful for departments to have access to records of students with a double major in within their discipline. (Dr. Nash)
- The problem with informal advising is that faculty feel they are not acknowledged or compensated for additional advising (Dr. Petrino)
- No paper trail of advising work and workload (Dr. Im)
- Lack of systematic information regarding resources for departmental advising (Dr. Jocelyn Boryczka, Chair of Politics)
- Faculty continue to see advising as service, rather than as a subset of teaching, and there are dangers in seeing advising as somehow uncompensated. Advising is essential to who a faculty is in the academy and their role with students; it is central within faculty f/t responsibilities. A change to the Rank and Tenure policy put a stronger focus on advising and this may help faculty see that good advising is valued. (Dean Crabtree)
- The general confusion is on the part of the student with advising (largely done well) and registration (largely chaotic). Student culture is a weakness. (Dr. Gudelunas)
- Students often come in unprepared. Would help to have a bullet point of items that students should prepare for their advising session. (Dr. DeWitt)
- Not enough time to cover all the important aspects of advising. (Dr. Schlichting)
- Ms. Klaf suggested that pre-work for students may help.
- The Psychology Department worked up a sheet that students are required to fill out. If they do not have this sheet, they do not receive their PIN. (Dr. Primavera)
- Lack of communication within a department and external to department. (Dr. Johnson)

- Variability in advising skills—If students do not like their advisor they will come to another faculty for informal advising. (Dr. Walker)
- Ms. Klaf mentioned that the skill piece is very important.
- The Dean commented that a weakness is that all faculty do not take the same care and responsibility, which places more responsibility on informal advisors. The Hallmark of the academy is peer review, so it's a problem when faculty do not hold their colleagues accountable for fulfilling their complete responsibilities and doing so effectively.
- Dr. Nash mentioned that VPA is working on this in their department. At times, student advising is more relative to problem solving, which is time consuming and involves multiple levels of support.
- Dr. Boryczka mentioned that she teaches students how to navigate the process.
- Ms. DeBiase mentioned that we lack a clear definition of good advising practices. We have a number of strong advisors and then a fair number of faculty who do not do it well, and there are no consequences for not doing it well. We need to better define advising expectations. There also are faculty who are strong advisors within their major but they ignore or know little about core advising. Students suffer the consequences when there is bad advising.
- Dr. Weiss mentioned that when she is not aware of an answer, she searches for the appropriate resources.

Discussion of Opportunities:

- Reimagine advising as mentoring, building relationships instead of a function. The name change alone may be helpful. (Dr. Williams)
- Direct students to select courses that may be good core classes to support their major. The Biology Department highlights core classes that may help with this.
- Communication built a system that works for the department, building a system that separates registration from advising. The problem is that students receive different information from the institution and the department around advising, so it takes a while for students to understand the department's culture.
- In the Psychology Department, student groups host events with four faculty members, covering topics such as internships and graduate schools. They take this opportunity for mentoring from multiple perspectives.
- Dr. Dallavalle mentioned that we should embrace the informal nature of being a “small school” making students aware of this to help them feel they are meeting many people who care about them.
- Associate Dean Simon mentioned that many folks talk about separating registration from mentoring without using the term advising at all. Yet, the first information students receive about spring advising comes from the Registrar's Office. Many departments send out their own advising materials. Simon suggested that departments set the tone for advising by “beating the Registrar's Office to the punch.”
- Dr. Nash mentioned that VPA is still receiving a list of students needing advisors. Every student should be assigned an advisor before the semester begins. Ms. York mentioned this might occur during a final cleanup, where students changed their major over the summer or are new to the University.

- There needs to be better communication regarding who student advisor's are; students do not know who to contact.

Discussion of Needs:

- Undeclared students are areas where there are retention problems. We need to reach out to students as early as possible.
- Need official advisor for 2nd majors (Dr. Johnson)
- Need support for students who are in a major that is not working for them. (Dr. Steffen)
- Need online office hour scheduling so students can schedule their own time with their advisor. There is technology that already exists to accommodate this option. (Dr. Gudelunas)
- Having a public schedule of advisors for walk-ins to offer big picture advising would be beneficial. (Dr. Dallavalle)
- The Dean mentioned that at her previous school they would take turns going to the advising center; faculty were available for students during specific time frames throughout open hours of the advising center. She also mentioned that technology solutions might be a possibility allowing students to become more proactive. e.g. code linked to advising schedule/QR code, which Scott Lacy is using on his office door.
- Outsourcing advising—Faculty from departments with a smaller number of majors could help departments with larger numbers of majors.
- The Biology Department is working on developmental advising sheets based on class year, listing specific advising topics.
- Dr. Perkus mentioned that we should create a storage system for advising documentation and inform folks where these resources can be found.
- Decrease the unnecessary demands on faculty's time (e.g. students who cannot get into classes). The current system causes the problem to be a faculty issue rather than a student problem. (Dr. Primavera)
- Junior faculty should shadow senior faculty to develop advising skills by sitting in on advising sessions to model an organic advising session. We could engage in role-plays as one way to discuss, understand, and strengthen faculty advising. (Dean Crabtree)
- There should be a way to make advising less silo-based, requiring faculty to know more about the fuller curriculum and also about areas beyond academics. (Dr. Nash)
- Difficult situations regarding students wanting to change their advisor for various reasons—racism, cultural reasons, etc. This is an awkward situation that happens more than students let on. (Dr. Gudelunas)
- Dr. Weiss feels that students should have the opportunity to select an advisor they feel comfortable with.

Associate Deans Im and Simon, along with the Dean, attended the AJCU Arts & Sciences Deans conference at Loyola Marymount and one of the largest sessions focused on advising. Associate Dean Simon shared that all Jesuit schools are seeking better ways to advise and all felt that advising at their institution needed improvement. Some schools are moving towards centralizing advising, breaking away from the faculty member. Dr. Simon will share with the Dean's

Council some of the ideas discussed. He encouraged chairs to think about advising and to learn about what other departments are doing. Simon talked to a lot of students and learned that they were not happy with the current faculty advising system; they want their PIN number and to get the process over. The Dean's Office discussed designing a checklist for students to use, so they invest time viewing their degree audit prior to their meeting with advisor. Dr. Simon will send this information to department chairs for feedback, and the Dean's Office will send out information to students, asking them to follow pre-steps before their advising sessions.

Dr. Walker receives student inquires often, asking which faculty member they should take for a given course. Should he make a suggestion towards a specific faculty member? Dr. Simon mentioned that he would highlight someone that would do a good job. Dr. Simon shared that he was involved in orientation for the first time this summer and in his group the student organizer mentioned that he had some "great information" for the group. "It doesn't matter what edition of the text book the professor asks for; just get the cheapest and the professor will never notice." This type of peer advising does not benefit the student; but on the other hand, the English Department had peer advising training that had positive outcomes.

Dr. Petrino noticed that many students feel that advising takes place once a semester, corresponds with the registration period, and is a one-shot deal. What she is hearing during this Dean's Council meeting is that good advising requires multiple meetings with students, begins early in the student's academic career, and is initiated typically by the professor. Faculty should reach out to students welcoming them and announcing their office hours, encouraging students to build faculty/student relationships.

Dr. Simon mentioned that it is beneficial to adapt a system where students are involved in a four-year plan. Dr. Nash shared that their majors have changed so much in terms of what their goals are over the course of their academic careers; it is important for faculty to monitor these goals and to determine whether we can meet emerging curricular expectations. It is more challenging to get the undeclared students to come in for advising, but starting with a general conversation to help students feel comfortable is a good first step.

Announcements and Routine Issues

- May Dean's Council Meeting – Thursday, May 8th will be the last DC meeting for the year. Ms. Daniele will send an Outlook response.
- Budget sheets should be coming out soon. Read instructional memo carefully and be concise with submissions.
- Banner and permissions—Ms. Christine Siegel is working on systematizing the process of Banner permissions, making sure that access to student information is managed according to sound policy. When a chair changes, departments should ensure that the new chair has permission. We will work with Ms. Daniele to be sure that particular notifications go through at any given time.
- The University has to report out faculty census data and there is some cleanup work that needs to be done. The Dean's Office will take care of making sure faculty information is accurate. Support staff in the Dean's Office working on this project is Ms. Jean

Siconolfi, Ms. Sandy Richardson, and Ms. Fran Yadre. They may reach out to chairs and/or program assistants for missing information.

- Academic Council agreed that FUSA could put 5 questions on the IDEA forms and that students could have access to that data FUSA designed questions that are being considered are:
 - The instructor was fair with respect to grading,
 - The instructor had technology in the classroom, making the course interesting
 - Students felt comfortable asking questions
 - I was comfortable talking to the professor outside of the classroom
 - I would recommend this course and the instructor.

The report from last spring is now being prepared and delivered to FUSA. Any course with lower than 50 percent response rate or fewer than three students will not be considered reliable and therefore won't be included in that report. But the data could be published verbatim or in any other form (e.g., "best" and "worst" or some such). They can use faculty names. Brace yourselves.

- Service Learning Faculty Outreach—Dr. Jocelyn Boryczka mentioned that she would welcome an opportunity to meet with departments for a conversation around service learning. It is a great way to learn about the many opportunities provided at Fairfield. She shared that there has been a change in the R&T process to include community-based scholarship. It is important for chairs to recognize this and think of ways to mentor faculty. The Dean noted that she would try to have a Dean's Council meeting focused on Engaged Departments in the spring.
- The Program on the Environment is proposing an academic major and is going to ASCC most likely at their next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.