

# Academic Advising Council

## Report from Spring 2009

### Charge and membership:

The purpose of the Academic Advising Council is to evaluate the administration and delivery of advising services to all students at Missouri State University and to make recommendations for improvements. The Council will identify current advising practices that are successful and encourage those practices among more advisors. The Academic Advising Council will work to enhance consistency and quality within the advising system and support student development initiatives. A first step was to compare our advising program at Missouri State to the guidelines published by the Council for the Advancement of Standards.

### Membership of the Academic Advising Council for Spring 2009:

Kathy Davis, Director, Academic Advisement Center, Chair

Sandy Culver, Director, Business Advisement Center

Stephanie Marinec, Coordinator, Professional Education Advisement Center

Angela Plank, Coordinator of Advising for Biology

Tom Tomasi, Associate Dean, Graduate College

Tracie Burt, Instructor/Advisement Coordinator, Psychology

Ann Woolsey, Advisor for TRIO Student Support Services

Jim Moyer, Professor, Religious Studies

Dave Lutz, Professor, Psychology

Maria Michalczyk, Associate Professor, Art and Design

Gloria Galanes, Professor, Communication

Gary Ward, Assistant Professor, Sports Medicine and Athletic Training

Norma McClellan, Professor, Music

Rachelle Darabi, Associate Provost

### **Progress during Spring 2009:**

The Academic Advising Council met four times during spring 2009. In the first meeting, we reviewed the Council for the Advancement of Standards “Standards and Guidelines for Academic Advising Programs.” Based on those standards, we identified the following strengths and weaknesses at Missouri State University.

#### **Strengths:**

- Training opportunities in Master Advisor Program
- High interest in advising on campus with a large number of faculty members committed to advising and active with the Master Advisor Training Program.
- On-campus and external relationships, with OTC, West Plains, and advisors across campus.
- A dedicated, ethical, and knowledgeable advising staff.
- Strong support services for advisors to make referrals for students.
- “Excellence in Advising” awards and state and national awards received by Missouri State advisors.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Lack of career ladder or other advancement opportunities for staff advisors.
- Would like to see more recognition in the Promotion and Tenure process for excellent faculty advisors. Would like to promote advising as teaching.
- Access to advising services has gap when faculty advisors are not on campus.
- Assessment and evaluation of advising services are done in some departments but not others. No campus-wide evaluation of advising services.
- Advising loads may not be equitable across departments and colleges.
- Anecdotal evidence indicates that pockets of bad advising may exist.
- Faculty and staff are stretched and some see advising as a responsibility that is expected but not rewarded.
- Although there is strong attendance at the advisor training programs, there is a perception that those who need the information most may not be participating.

After determining these strengths and weaknesses, the Academic Advising Council discussed the following challenges and issues at the March meeting:

### **Campus-wide commitment to excellent academic advising**

1. Increase status of advising campus-wide.
2. Change culture so that faculty members who have assigned advisees see advising as necessary and important.
3. Assessment of advising and accountability for advisors.
4. Advising should be documented in tenure and promotion (as part of teaching).
5. Create minimum acceptable standards document for advisors on campus.
6. Increase consistency of good advising across campus.

### **Improving advising for transfer students**

1. Bring back training for transfer advisors.
2. Better information exchange with OTC and other community colleges.

### **New challenges and opportunities in advisor training and development**

1. Create on-line advisor training module that could help count toward master advisor recertification.
2. Encouraging advising training within departments.
3. Reaching advisors who have not been reached by previous training efforts.

### **Best practices in advising administration**

1. Develop a “best practices for advising in departments” document and share it with AAA. (e.g. advising coordinator)
2. Few opportunities for advancement for staff advisors. (Career ladder for staff advisors?)
3. Access to advising services for students year-round (gap in services when faculty members are not on campus.)
4. Work on equitable advising load across campus.
5. Have an “advising audit” available for departmental use.

### **Plans for Fall 2009:**

After discussing these issues, the members decided to form four sub-committees to address various areas where we believe we can make important changes:

- **Write a “standards for advisors” document.** Sandy Culver, Stephanie Marinec and Gloria Galanes tackled this project and have a draft completed. Academic Advising Council plans to act on the recommended document at our September meeting.
- **Create a “best practices for advising in departments” document.** Tracie Burt and Angela Plank have recently completed a draft for the Council to review with a goal of having a completed document by the October meeting.
- **Develop an on-line advisor training module** to substitute for a Master Advisor Refresher Workshop. Kathy Davis, Maria Michalczyk, Angela Plank and Tracie Burt will work on the first phase of this project during July and August. Gary Rader, Director of Online Education, has agreed to help.
- **Investigate current faculty advising loads and recommend standards.** Tom Tomasi, Jim Moyer and Dave Lutz are working on this sub-committee and will have a report ready for the November meeting.
- **Conduct a campus-wide evaluation of advising** by surveying students in selected classes. A draft of the survey instrument is attached to this document.

Two advisors from the Academic Advisement Center attended the “NACADA Summer Institute on Academic Advising” during June 2009. Ross Hawkins wrote his action plan on Training for Transfer Advisors. Amy Marie Aufdembrink wrote her action plan on a Career Ladder for Professional Advisors. Both Ross and Amy Marie will be asked to report on their areas of interest at a fall meeting of the Academic Advising Council.

Two members of the Academic Advising Council have retired or will retire soon: Ann Woolsey from TRIO Student Support Services and Norma McClellan from Music. Dr. McCarthy has appointed Tracy Dalton from English and Jamaine Abidogun from Secondary Education advising to the Academic Advising Council beginning in fall 2009. Gary Rader will also join the group to represent the interests of online students.

**Attachment: DRAFT Academic Advising Survey**

**Please help us assess and improve our academic advising services by answering the following questions. We expect the survey to take approximately ten minutes of your time.**

Have you declared a major? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what is your declared major?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is your assigned academic advisor?

How many times have you met with your assigned advisor?

How many college hours have you completed? \_\_\_\_ 0—29 \_\_\_\_ 30—59 \_\_\_\_ 60—89 \_\_\_\_ 90+

How many semesters have you attended Missouri State University? \_\_\_\_ this is my first \_\_\_\_ 2 or 3  
\_\_\_\_ 4 or 5 \_\_\_\_ 6 or more

Where do you generally meet with your academic advisor?

\_\_\_\_ Faculty Advisor's office

\_\_\_\_ Academic Advisement Center

\_\_\_\_ Business Advisement Center

\_\_\_\_ Professional Education Advisement Center

\_\_\_\_ Psychology Advisement Center

\_\_\_\_ Other, please list:

**Please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.**

**Write the appropriate number in the spaces provided: (1 = Disagree strongly to 5 = Agree strongly).**

\_\_\_\_ Overall, the academic advising I have received at Missouri State has met my needs.

\_\_\_\_ My academic advisor is friendly and helpful.

\_\_\_\_ My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the programs at Missouri State University.

\_\_\_\_ My academic advisor listens to me and treats me with respect.

\_\_\_ When my academic advisor doesn't know something, she/he finds the answer or refers me to the appropriate offices.

\_\_\_ My advisor is reasonably accessible for appointment meetings (usually within one week of calling for an appointment).

\_\_\_ My advisor responds to any phone messages or emails within a reasonable period of time (usually 1-2 business days).

\_\_\_ My advisor helped answer any questions I had regarding my general education requirements.

\_\_\_ I understand what courses and requirements are necessary to complete a degree at Missouri State University.

\_\_\_ My academic advisor encourages me to be involved and engaged at Missouri State University.

\_\_\_ My academic advisor helps me understand opportunities for internships, organizations and other opportunities within my major department.

\_\_\_ I would recommend my assigned academic advisor to other students.

\_\_\_ I had a positive advising experience at Student Orientation Advisement and Registration (SOAR).

\_\_\_ I am committed to graduating from Missouri State University.

**How** have advising services been helpful to you?

**How** could advising services improve?

If you are a **transfer student**, tell us about your experience transferring to Missouri State University.