

2005-2006 :: Advising in General Studies

1. Mission Statement:

The School of General Studies has always highly valued our Undergraduate Advising team and sought to stay in the forefront of advising at the University of Texas at Dallas. Our mission is to provide accurate and timely advising to a student body from a wide variety of backgrounds: from incoming freshmen to nontraditional and transfer students. With our highly flexible degree plans, our academic advisors have to help students to develop a degree plan to fit their individualized needs, and then encourage, assist and even cajole students to reach their goals. Integral to our mission is good communication among the advisors, within our School (General Studies), with the Registrar's Office, Enrollment Services, and with the Office of Undergraduate Education to keep our advisors current on university policies and procedures which affect the lives of our students

2. Objectives:

2.1 To provide accurate academic program information.: To provide accurate and relevant information to students about our academic programs and other educational experiences available to them.

2.1.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 10. Foundational Knowledge in Discipline(s); 11. Advanced Knowledge in Discipline(s); 13. Independent Research; 17. Internship; 18. Practicum

2.1.2 Related Strategic Plan Item(s):

II-1 The Education of Leaders; II-3 Investment in People; III-1 Dynamic Change Management; VI-1 K-16 Education

2.1.3 Related Institutional Priority Item(s):

SP-7 Enhance Graduation Rates; COM-2 Protect Enrollment Gains, Access and Student Quality as part of moving toward Tier One Status

2.1.4 Standards and Associations:

Advisors attend NACADA meetings. NACADA stands for the National Academic Advising Association.

2.1.5 Student Related Objective: Yes - This is a student related objective.

2.2 To match students needs with degrees.:

With our highly flexible degree plans, our academic advisors have to help students to develop a degree plan to fit their individualized needs.

2.2.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 1. Communication; 10. Foundational Knowledge in Discipline(s); 11. Advanced Knowledge in Discipline(s); 17. Internship; 18. Practicum

2.2.2 Related Strategic Plan Item(s):

II-1 The Education of Leaders; II-3 Investment in People; II-4 Enhancement of Diversity and Inclusion

2.2.3 Related Institutional Priority Item(s): COM-2 Protect Enrollment Gains, Access and Student Quality as part of moving toward Tier One Status

2.2.4 Student Related Objective: Yes - This is a student related objective.

2.3 To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge: Integral to our mission is good communication among the advisors, within our School (General Studies), with the Registrar's Office, Enrollment Services, and with the Office of Undergraduate Education to keep our advisors current on university policies and procedures which affect the lives of our students

3. Measures & Findings:

3.1 To assess advisors` knowledge of gen. ed. material: To assess advisors` knowledge of general education requirements using the Undergraduate Advising Report produced in Feb. 06

3.1.1 Success Criteria:

Using the Undergraduate Dean`s 2006 advising report, obtain a score of 3 out of 4. Four is the maximum score

3.1.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.

3.1.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: Score of 3.62 - second highest advising score among schools at UTD.

3.1.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.1.5 Further Action: No

3.2 To assess advisors` knowledge of transfer credit: To assess advisors` knowledge of transfer credits, using the Undergraduate Dean`s 2006 advising Report.

3.2.1 Success Criteria: Using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising report, obtain a score of 3 out of 4 .

3.2.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.

3.2.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: Our advisors achieved a score of 3.56 which is the highest advising score in schools at UTD.

3.2.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.2.5 Further Action: No

3.3 To assess advisors` knowledge of degree plans: Using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising report and my own Survey Monkey report generated in Dec. 06, I wanted to assess the advisors` knowledge of degree plans

3.3.1 Success Criteria:

Using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising report, I wanted to obtain a score of 3 out of 4 . I also wished to have the Survey Monkey score of over 70% of the students in the survey responding that they were happy with the advisors` knowledge of degree plans. (Survey Monkey.com is an online survey , which allows one to devise surveys, collect data, and even have it analyzed. There is a small annual fee to subscribe to this service.)

3.3.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.

3.3.3 Results Related To Success Criteria:

Score of 3.57 - second highest score among schools at UTD on the Undergraduate Dean`s Advising survey.

Also on Survey Monkey Advising Survey conducted 12/06, 94.6% of respondents stated that our advisors provide accurate information.

3.3.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.3.5 Further Action: No

3.4 To assess advisors` knowledge of course offerings: To assess advisors` knowledge of course offerings using the Undergraduate Dean`s Advising report (2006)

3.4.1 Success Criteria: Using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising report, obtain a score of 3 out of 4 .

3.4.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

3.4.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: Score of 3.55 - second highest advising score among schools at UTD.

3.4.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.4.5 Further Action: No

3.5 To meet with each student once a semester.: To facilitate communication advisors should try to meet with each student at a minimum of once a semester. This will be assessed using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising Report (2006)

3.5.1 Success Criteria:

Since we have @800 students that should mean a minimum number of annual student contacts of $3 \times 800 = 2400$ contacts.

3.5.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

3.5.3 Results Related To Success Criteria:

In the Undergraduate Dean`s Survey (2006), General Studies advisors had 5,100 contacts registered in Advise Web, well above the minimum 2400 for a once a semester contact.

3.5.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.5.5 Further Action: No

3.6 To assess advisors` knowledge of policy.:

To assess advisors` knowledge of UTD policies and procedures, using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising survey.

3.6.1 Success Criteria: Using the Undergraduate Dean`s 2006 advising report, obtain a score of 3 out of 4 .

3.6.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

3.6.3 Results Related To Success Criteria:

Obtained a score of 3.57, the highest advising score at UTD among the schools.

3.6.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.6.5 Further Action: No

3.7 To assess students` advising satisfaction.:

How does student rate satisfaction with advising at UTD? This will be assessed using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising survey.

3.7.1 Success Criteria: Using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising report, obtain a score of 3 out of 4 .

3.7.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

3.7.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: Score of 3.43 - the second highest advising score at UTD.

3.7.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.7.5 Further Action: No

3.8 To assess advisors` concern with students` welfare: To assess advisors` concern with students` welfare as assessed through the Undergraduate Dean`s Advising report and through the Survey Monkey data collected in 12/06

3.8.1 Success Criteria:

Using the Undergraduate Dean`s 2006 advising report, the goal is to obtain a score of 3 or higher out of a total 4. Also on school survey (Survey Monkey 12/06) the goal is a score of 70% or higher of students who stated that the advisors were concerned about them.

3.8.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

3.8.3 Results Related To Success Criteria:

The score on the Undergraduate Dean`s Survey was 3.34 - the second highest advising score at UTD among the schools. The Survey Monkey findings were 90.8% of students (out of 118) thought that their advisors cared about their welfare.

3.8.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.8.5 Further Action: No

3.9 To assess advisors` help in clarifying ed. goals.: To assess advisors` help in clarifying students` educational goals. This will be assessed using the Undergraduate Dean`s Advising Survey.

3.9.1 Success Criteria: Using the Undergraduate Dean`s advising report, obtain a score of 3 out of 4 .

3.9.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

3.9.3 Results Related To Success Criteria:

Score of 3.34 - highest advising score at UTD. Will keep up the good work and try to improve score to over 3.5

3.9.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.9.5 Further Action: No

3.10 To improve communication with Teacher Development: As a result of the Survey Monkey advising survey, and personal talks with students, we need to facilitate communication among the advisors in Teacher Development and General Studies

3.10.1 Success Criteria:

Will add question to Survey Monkey to assess how severe the communication lack is, and add this to our discussions to see what steps can be taken to alleviate. Ideally, on the next Survey there should be an over 70% satisfaction rate.

3.10.2 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

3.10.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: For the early part of 2005-2006, when the Teachers Development program was housed on the same floor as General Studies, there was no communication problem, as advisors simply walked back and forth between the two offices, and there were no complaints. Increased meetings between two departments now housed in separate buildings would help resolve this problem.

3.10.4 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.10.5 Further Action: Yes**5. Closing the Loop:****5.1 Continue advising information exchange.:**

Continue to meet with advisors regularly to inform them of catalog and program changes.

5.1.1 Related Objective(s):

To provide accurate academic program information.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

5.1.2 Related Measure(s):

To assess advisors` knowledge of gen. ed. material; To assess advisors` knowledge of transfer credit; To assess advisors` knowledge of degree plans; To assess advisors` knowledge of policy.; To assess advisors` help in clarifying ed. goals.

5.1.3 Responsible Person: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in General Studies**5.1.4 Target Date:** meetings as needed each semester**5.1.5 Priority:** High Priority**5.2 Talk with advisors to see what programs are wanted:** Keep up communication with advisors to see if there are any unmet needs of students, or any student problems with current degrees. This will help us develop new programs/concentrations.**5.2.1 Related Objective(s):**

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

5.2.2 Related Measure(s):

To assess advisors` knowledge of course offerings; To assess advisors` knowledge of policy.; To assess advisors` concern with students` welfare; To assess students` advising satisfaction.; To assess advisors` help in clarifying ed. goals.

5.2.3 Responsible Person: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in General Studies**5.2.4 Target Date:** each semester as often as required.**5.2.5 Priority:** High Priority**5.3 Meet with advisors regularly to exchange info.:** Meet with advisors, to see where problems are arising and take steps to rectify the problems. These meetings involve Teacher Development where needed.**5.3.1 Related Objective(s):**

To provide accurate academic program information.; To match students needs with degrees.; To keep up communication for exchange of knowledge

5.3.2 Related Measure(s):

To assess advisors` knowledge of gen. ed. material; To assess advisors` knowledge of transfer credit; To assess advisors` knowledge of degree plans; To assess advisors` knowledge of course offerings; To assess advisors` knowledge of policy.; To assess students` advising satisfaction.; To assess advisors` concern with students` welfare; To assess advisors` help in clarifying ed. goals.

5.3.3 Responsible Person: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in General Studies**5.3.4 Target Date:** each semester as often as required.**5.3.5 Priority:** High Priority**6. Analysis:****6.1 Program/Unit Strengths:****6.1.1 Objectives/Outcomes Exceeded or Met:** All the advising scores demonstrated that the academic advisors are doing a very good job. We consistently rank either first or second amongst the schools at UTD.**6.2 Program / Unit Weaknesses:****6.2.1 Objectives / Outcomes Partially or Not Met:** When you are second best, you have to try harder to be the best, and this will mean looking for ways to "tweak" our advising. We will have to go beyond straight advising and try to incorporate more generalized UTD information into advising sessions.**7. Report:****7.1 Executive Summary:**

The School of General Studies prides itself upon the relevance and accuracy of its academic advising. We will

strive to continue on this path and strive to keep improving our services. On Dean Coleman's 2006 advising survey, the advisors in the School of General Studies were ranked second only to those in the Undergraduate Dean's Office. Our school will continue to be accessible to students by responding to student contacts via email, fax, in person appointments, or by walk-in appointments (if there are no booked appointments, which take precedence.)

7.2 Top 3 Program/Unit Accomplishments: In the last survey by Dean Coleman, we were consistently ranked in first or second place with regard to academic advising. We have continued to attract a large number of transfer students, by being willing to talk to prospective students who may not transfer to UTD for a semester or two.

7.3 Research Activities or Publications:

Irene Marroquin has a Master's degree and Janet Collins and Esther Johnston are currently working towards their Master's degrees. Also Irene attended a NACADA Advising Conference this year.

7.4 Instructional/Training Activities (presented or received): Irene Marroquin teaches two sections of RHET 1101 which is a course required by all freshmen to help in their adjustment to university life. Also all our advisors have attended the Undergraduate Advising sessions offered by Dr. Cynthia Jenkins, and the pertinent training sessions offered by the Registrar's Office and by Enrollment Services. All our advisors attend all meetings, so that they get their information first hand.

7.5 Public Service:

We have always been willing to advise students at the community colleges who wish to transfer to UTD. Until recently, this has not been a policy at UTD. Many students were turned away if they were not registered students. Also, we always offer friendly and courteous service to phone calls which reach us because we are General Studies, and they have "general" questions, which have nothing to do with our school. Back, in 1994, we began the practice of phoning students who attended one semester and then did not attend the second one. We tried to find out, in a non-threatening manner, why they did not return. Most were surprised and pleased that we had noticed their absence. Many promised to return. The main reasons for "stopping out" were financial and/or family/work issues.

7.6 Other External Activities: N/A

7.7 Contributions to UTD:

Good advising leads to improved retention and graduation rates. In our graduation survey the response to the question "How many other institutions in total have you attended including UTD?", 19% had attended 2, 56% had attended 3, 19% had attended 4 and 6% had attended 5. I think that it is a tribute to our advisors that we helped these students graduate. Also we serve as a possible internal transfer school for students who decide that their first choice of major was not an appropriate one. If they transfer up until their junior year, we can probably accommodate most of the courses taken for other schools, on one of our degree plans.

7.8 Top 3 Program / Unit Challenges:

Our main challenge is to keep improving. We do a very good job, but there is always room for improvement. Our biggest challenge is to keep up the close collaborative ties that developed between the General Studies advisors and the advisors in Teacher Development when we were physically housed on the same floor of the same building. Teacher Development has been moved to a new building, and students as well as advisors are finding this new scenario more problematic.