AgEdS Department  
Academic Advising Committee  
Summary of Accomplishments  

May 8, 2009

An ad-hoc Academic Advising Committee was appointed by Department Chair, Robert Martin in June, 2007. The committee met regularly throughout the 2008-2009 academic year. The attached documents were developed by the committee and approved by the faculty.

Enclosed you will find the following documents.

- Academic advising mission, vision, and value statements (approved November 19, 2008)
- Advising evaluation procedures (approved August 21, 2008)
- AgEdS academic evaluation instrument (approved April 8, 2009)
- Academic advising benchmark proposal (approved May 6, 2009)
- Advising coverage and physical structure (approved May 6, 2009)
- Advising and recruiting staff proposal (approved May 6, 2009)

Respectfully submitted,

Academic Advising Committee  
Tom Polito, Chair  
Helen Olson  
Greg Miller  
Mike Retallick
Vision for Academic Advising
Academic advising in the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies is an integral component of the teaching and learning process which enhances the student’s connection to the university and college via a balanced use of resources, personal interaction, and commitment to student success using a holistic learner-centered approach.

Mission of Academic Advising
To help students achieve their potential.

Values Related to Academic Advising
In the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies, we believe…

… Teaching and advising are central to the mission of AgEdS.
… The department is a community made up of all students, faculty, and staff.
… The department, in addition to the adviser, is responsible for achieving academic advising outcomes.
… Academic advising is a collaborative activity based upon a shared responsibility among the student, adviser, department, and resource centers including academic affairs, student affairs, and support services

The role of the adviser and the academic advising relationship is to assist students in:

➢ Developing suitable educational plans
➢ Clarifying career and life goals
➢ Evaluating students’ progress toward their degrees
➢ Developing decision-making skills
➢ Becoming independent learners

To fulfill their role, advisers are expected to:

• Be available with reasonable office hours
• Respond to student questions, concerns or problems in a timely manner
• Listen
• Process course substitutions and other advising related paperwork in a timely manner
• Help troubleshoot problems for their advisees or refer them to the appropriate people who can
• Be knowledgeable in the following areas
  o Degree and program requirements
  o Campus student support services
  o Indicators of student potential and success
  o University deadlines
  o Career options and expectations
• Be available to serve as a mentor to advisees

Approved by AgEdS Faculty (Nov. 19, 2008)
As part of the adviser/advisee relationship, students are expected to:

- Communicate with their advisers
- Be respectful of their advisers’ time
- Ultimately make their own decisions after consulting with their advisers
- Follow through on advisers’ recommendations
- Take personal responsibility for their education, experiences and personal development
- Develop a graduation plan
- Realize that some questions and problems do not elicit immediate responses or solutions.
- Be aware of the registration advising period, registration dates, and add/drop deadlines
- Know their degree and program requirements
- Be open to recommendations concerning schoolwork, study habits and academic progress
- Listen
- Know how to correctly make appointments with their advisers
- Follow through with appointments
- Be prepared for their meetings with their advisers and ask questions
Advising Evaluation Procedures

Development of an updated advising evaluation form

1. The AGEDS coordinator of advising will disseminate the current advising evaluation form to all faculty and staff who have advising responsibilities. In addition to the current form, the director will disseminate additional information that would be useful in determining appropriate evaluation criteria.

2. After faculty and staff have had an opportunity to review the current form and supplemental information, the coordinator will lead a discussion aimed at establishing the criteria we will use to evaluate advising in the department.

3. Based on this discussion the coordinator will prepare a draft advising evaluation “form.” This form will be disseminated to AGEDS faculty and staff for feedback. The coordinator will revise the form to reflect this feedback.

4. A meeting will be held to discuss/approve the new form. This form will include evaluation criteria focused on the advisor, support staff, and overall departmental advising policies, procedures, and coordination.

Administration of Advising Evaluation

1. The advising evaluation form will be administered online each semester.

2. The online evaluation should be coordinated with the Brenton Center. SurveyMonkey or some other tool for online data collection should be used.

3. The AGEDS department chair will prepare a “cover letter” to be sent through the online data collection system three weeks prior to the end of each semester. Two follow-up reminders will be sent at one week intervals.

4. The AGEDS coordinator of advising will take the excel file produced by the online survey and process it as follows:
   - Individual electronic reports for faculty and staff with comparisons to departmental averages as appropriate. Faculty and staff should include this data in their annual reports.
   - An overall report to guide decisions about group professional development activities, and proposed changes to policies, procedures and coordination.

Note: This will standardize the data collection process, allow all students to participate, and yield data that can be utilized more effectively than the standard paper and pencil form.

Professional Development

The AGEDS coordinator of advising will:

- Plan at least one departmental professional development activity each year focused on addressing an area in need of improvement. The focus should be based on needs identified by faculty and staff and/or advising evaluation data.
- Regularly disseminate information about ISU resources aimed at advisor professional development.

All advisors should have some “basic training” and opportunities to go back for a refresher. If there is nothing at the college or university level, there should be. The departmental representative to academic affairs should raise the issue of advisor “basic training” at the college level.

Approved by AgEdS Faculty (Aug. 21, 2008)
Iowa State University
Department of Agricultural Education and Studies
Academic Advising Evaluation

Instructions (Entry Page): Thank you for taking the time to evaluate advising in the AgEdS Department. Your evaluation and any related comments will remain anonymous.

1. Please identify your current academic advisor <Note: To click through to the evaluation, students will have to identify their academic advisor>

Please rate the extent to which each of the following statements are true.
<4 point Likert-type Scale: 1 = Almost never true, 2 = Usually not true, 3 = Usually true, 4 = Almost always true, 5 = Not Applicable>

My advisor …
2. Assists me in developing a suitable educational plan.
3. Helps me clarify my career and life goals.
4. Evaluates my progress toward a degree.
5. Assists me in making my own decisions.
6. Encourages me to take ownership of my learning.
7. Is available with reasonable office hours.
8. Responds to me in a timely manner.
9. Listens to me.
10. Processes course substitutions and paperwork in a timely manner.
11. Troubleshoots problems or refers me to the appropriate people who can.
12. Is knowledgeable regarding my degree and its requirements.
13. Is knowledgeable regarding support services for students.
15. Is knowledgeable regarding career options and expectations.
16. Is available to serve as a mentor.

What are the best advising attributes of your advisor? (OPEN RESPONSE)

What areas related to advising could your advisor strengthen? (OPEN RESPONSE)
YOU: THE ADVISEE

Please rate the extent to which each of the following statements are true.

<4 point Likert-type Scale: 1 = Almost never true, 2 = Usually not true, 3 = Usually true, 4 = Almost always true, 5 = Not Applicable>

I, as an advisee, …

1. Initiate communication with my advisor.
2. Am respectful of my advisor’s time.
3. Ask for advice and use it to make decisions.
4. Follow through on my advisor’s recommendations.
5. Take personal responsibility for my education, experiences and personal development.
6. Continue to develop an academic plan for graduation.
7. Understand that some questions and problems cannot be solved immediately.
8. Am aware of registration dates and add/drop deadlines.
9. Know my degree and program requirements.
10. Am open to recommendations concerning schoolwork, study habits and academic progress.
11. Listen to the suggestions of my advisor.
12. Know how to make appointments with my advisor.
13. Follow through with appointments.
14. Am prepared with proper materials (e.g., degree audit, 4-year plan, etc.) for meetings with my advisor.
15. Am prepared to ask questions when meeting with my advisor.

SUPPORT STAFF

Please rate the extent to which each of the following statements are true.

<4 point Likert-type Scale: 1 = Almost never true, 2 = Usually not true, 3 = Usually true, 4 = Almost always true, 5 = Not Applicable>

The office staff in the department…

Welcomes and greets me.
Is willing to assist.
Conveys a positive first impression.
Listens carefully.
Answers questions in a professional manner.
Is prompt in responding to requests.
Assists with making appointments.
Directs me to the appropriate person(s).

Please provide additional comments related to office staff.
**DEPARTMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND COORDINATION**

Would you read a departmental newsletter if it were provided electronically?
Yes/No

If so, what topics and information would you like to see in the newsletter? <open response>

Should you be required to meet with your advisor before getting your RAN each semester?

How would you prefer to obtain your Registration Access Number (RAN)? Check all that apply.
- Face-to-face meeting with your advisor
- Phone conversation with your advisor
- Email communication with your advisor
- Directly from AccessPlus
- Other

What types of advising sessions would you prefer?
- One-on-one
- In pairs (two students at a time)
- Small group advising
- Phone
- Email

Please provide any additional comments or suggestions related to AgEdS academic advising. (OPEN RESPONSE)

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Possible topics**

Gender MALE FEMALE

Are you a transfer student (began at ISU with more than 24 CC credits) YES NO

Number of credits earned applied to your degree program at the end of the semester (0-29, 30-59, 60-89, 90+)
The special committee on academic advising in AGEDS recommends that faculty and staff adopt to following benchmark:

A faculty or staff member with 240 advisees (combination of undergraduate students and non-thesis graduate students) would be considered a full time advisor.

This benchmark was determined after considering benchmarks from other departments, and estimating reasonable amounts of time required to perform the following duties:

1) Interpret ISU academic policies and procedures for students
2) Assist students with course selection, scheduling, registration, monitor progress towards degree and accuracy of degree audit.
3) Discuss career opportunities, preparation for graduate or professional school, internship opportunities.
4) Refer students to university resources to enhance academic performance and educational success at ISU
5) Provide information to prospective students and families regarding academic opportunities and personal and professional experiences at ISU (recruitment).
6) Teach orientation classes as well as assist with orientation programs for new students
7) Facilitate learning community (e.g. assist with activities, organize social event)
8) Supervise peer mentors for learning community
9) Advise student organization related to major
10) Serve on one departmental and one college committee
11) Engage in professional development

The committee further recommends that the department use this benchmark to determine our:

1. capacity based upon faculty and staff PRSs.
2. current status (below, at, or beyond capacity).
Advising Coverage

We recommend establishing a triage system for students who believe they need to see their adviser but the adviser is unavailable. This system will require an on call adviser schedule and for advisers to share (both read and write) their calendars with a triage point person. Students who need to see an unavailable adviser would go to the triage point person who would either schedule an appointment for the student with the assigned adviser. Or, under appropriate circumstances, arrange an appointment with the on call adviser at the earliest possible time.

One factor that may be leading to the “don’t care” perception is the inability of students to see their advisers when they need to. Clearly, lack of planning on the part of a student does not constitute an emergency for an adviser. However, students have unexpected challenges arise and for some of those it is desirable to consult with an adviser.

Physical structure – Offices

There are times when one can enter room 217 and be confronted with all closed doors. For a student with a crisis this can lead to the perception that there is no one to help them. Therefore, we recommend that the department strive to place undergraduate advisers in an office complex that includes all advisers and a secretary. In the long term this may require remodeling which should be high on the priority list for departmental fundraising. In the short term, signage needs to be put in place in room 217 that directs students to the triage point person in the event their adviser is not available.

Approved by AgEdS Faculty (May 6, 2009)
AgEdS Department
Academic Advising Committee
Advising and Recruiting Staff Proposal

Current Undergraduate Advising Situation

Student enrollment has been increasing and is nearly to the record enrollments the department experienced in 2001. See attached. In addition, the graduate program enrollment has increased causing addition time commitments of the graduate faculty. The time commitment is especially high for those students in the off campus programs.

There have been changes in the faculty and staff members who are responsible for academic advising. Professional and Scientific academic advisors have been replaced with faculty, primarily probationary faculty. See attached.

A tenure-track, probationary faculty member currently serves as the director of the undergraduate program and coordinates academic advising in the department. In addition to individual academic advising, this person is responsible for the coordination of the following activities:

- AgEdS Departmental Undergraduate Advising
- AgEdS Departmental Undergraduate Admissions
  - Approximately 90 students annually
  - Orientation for Transfers for department
  - Freshman Orientation for department
- AgEdS Learning Community
  - 20 students 2007-2008 academic year
  - 2 Peer Mentors
- Community College Articulations and recruitment
- High school visits when requested
- Transfer visit days
- Undergraduate recruitment plan for department
- Student registration for the department
  - Newsletters and email communications
- Visits to the department by prospective students and parents
- Review and update degree audit sheets and four year plans
- Advertisement and Awarding of departmental scholarships
- Represent department on college and university recruitment events
- Undergraduate Departmental Web Site Coordinator (Content)

The person generally represents the department on the academic affairs committee and until the 2007-2008 academic year served on the recruitment committee, which includes managing Experience Iowa State Days for department
Proposal

It is proposed that the department realign its undergraduate leadership to better serve students and better enable faculty to meet the university’s expectation for teaching, discovery, and engagement. The committee offers two recommendations to implement this proposal.

First, it is recommended that tenured faculty member in the department be assigned as director of the undergraduate program. This person would provide leadership and visioning for the undergraduate program, would work closely with the coordinator of academic advising and the departmental curriculum committee (among others), and address policy issues related to the undergraduate program. The person would be responsible for:

- Oversight of the undergraduate program
- Work closely with the faculty on curriculum issues
- Working with the College and Registrar’s Offices on DARS programming
- Working with the College and Registrar’s Offices on policy issues
- Provide leadership in assessing and improving the undergraduate program.
- Coordinate the departmental scholarship committee
- Provide leadership in the development of recruitment plan and materials

Second, it is recommended that a professional and scientific academic advisor/recruiter be hired to serve as the coordinator of academic advising and recruitment. The person would handle the day-to-day academic advising operation, which would include triaging advising issues, facilitating departmental communications with students, advisors, and staff, and managing the meetings with prospective students. In addition, a major focus for this position would be student recruitment, which would not only positively impact the department, but also the college and university. This person would also be responsible for the following activities:

- AgEdS Departmental undergraduate advising
- AgEdS Departmental undergraduate admissions
  - Approximately 90 students annually
  - Orientation for Transfers for department
  - Freshman Orientation for department
- Teach section of AgEds 110 course
- AgEdS Learning Community
  - 20 students 2008-2009 academic year
  - Supervise 2 Peer Mentors
- Facilitate the departmental recruitment process and actively recruit off campus
- Develop and maintain community college articulations and recruitment
- High school and prospective student visits as requested
- Experience Iowa State Days for department
- Transfer Visit Days for department
- Implement undergraduate recruitment plan for department
- Departmental undergraduate communications
  - Student registration for the department

AgEdS Academic Advisor Proposal
Approved by AgEdS Faculty (May 6, 2009)
Page 2 of 3
- Newsletters and email communications
- Job and internship announcements

- Visits to the department by prospective students and parents
- Review and update curriculum sheets and four year plans
- Advertisement and coordination of departmental scholarships
- Represent department on college and university requirement events
- Undergraduate departmental web site coordinator

It is realized that the financial situation at ISU is dire. However, with the size of the AgEdS department and the limited number of faculty and professional and scientific staff, the department, college, and university would benefit from an increase in efficiency and optimal resource utilization with the addition of academic advisor/recruiter. The following is a list of benefits to the department, college, and university:

1. Better Academic advising
   a. Increased student satisfaction
   b. Increased retention of students to help stabilize and maintain department enrollments at a high level
   c. Meet student needs in a more timely and efficient manner

2. Increased and purposeful focus of recruitment
   a. Counter the declining number of high school graduates in Iowa and surrounding states
   b. Commit more focused time and effort visiting high schools and community colleges
   c. Cover broader geographic area (i.e., expand into bordering states)
   d. Capitalize on the relationship with ag high school and community college teachers in the state
   e. Keep current the community college articulation agreements and expand to other colleges where agreements have not been developed
   f. Meet the employment demand for agriculture education and life science majors

3. Increased support for probationary faculty
   a. Help them to focus on those components of their position vital for earning tenure

4. Better and more efficient use of faculty and university resources
   a. Greater focus on teaching
      i. Influences student satisfaction and retention
   b. Greater focus on scholarship
      i. Increase in quality and quantity of publications
   c. Increased time available to explore grant opportunities
      i. Generated revenue streams for the university
      ii. Created other opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students
   d. Increase time available for collaborative activities with stakeholders
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