

First Individual Meeting with Advisees - Discussion Ideas

With the implementation of bannerweb advising during the summer, most first-year and transfer students arrive with a full or near-full schedule of courses for fall semester. That has reduced the stress involved in these first individual meetings with advisees, however, these meetings remain important to students getting a good academic start.

During this meeting, it is a good idea to:

- Spend a little time talking informally – Look for common interests, share some personal information (about family, hobbies, etc. if comfortable, or about research interests, academic history, etc...), and begin building a sense of comfort and trust.
- Briefly overview graduation requirements – While it is a good idea to talk about this more fully in a later meeting (students are often overwhelmed when they first arrive and aren't yet ready to take in much new information), it can be helpful to talk for a few minutes about needing 120 hours/35 units for graduation, successful completion of a major, and satisfaction of general education requirements. You might point them to the catalog and let them know the importance of the catalog as a resource and policy document.
- Review fall courses – Spend a few minutes looking at the student's schedule on bannerweb. Be certain they are getting comfortable with BannerWeb. (You may want to recommend the online tutorials and encourage them to talk with older students for pointers.) A few critical things to look for:
 - Students taking too many units. (It is rarely a good idea for first-year students to start out with a heavier-than-normal course load. Slightly lighter than possible can be helpful for most who will be going through plenty of adjustment issues.)
 - Students taking too heavy a combination of courses, or courses that are all alike. (A student taking FYS, History, English, Philosophy, and Religion will likely drown in the assigned reading and writing. Students who struggled with math and science in high school may not want to start with physics and calculus during fall semester. Talk through these issues with the student.)
 - Students including a course or two in potential major areas. (Students are often so concerned with satisfying general education requirements that they forget to be exploring possible majors. Understanding that up to 1/3 of a student's courses are electives can help students be less stressed during their first semesters as they try and balance requirements with courses/areas of interest.)
 - URAWARE, and FYS

- Discuss your role as advisor – Once a student has a schedule that seems appropriate, spend a few minutes talking about what you believe to be your responsibilities as an advisor and what you believe are the student's responsibilities as an advisee. Let him/her know that you're here and willing to be a valuable resource.
- Discuss anything that might need referral – Though this can require a careful touch, you may want to ask your advisees if there are medical, learning disability, or other issues that might impact the student's academic performance or adjustment to the university.
- FERPA - Discuss the FERPA form and have the student sign/not sign. Send the forms to the Registrar's Office.