**University Advising Center Assessment Report Academic Year 2018-2019**

In the University Advising Center we dedicate our advising resources to improve student outcomes over the several areas for which we advise. Due to the nature of our work with FTIAC students, our assessment cycle begins with planning and execution of orientation in the previous spring/summer term and ends with assessing enrollment data for the following fall semester, so extends beyond the regular fall and winter terms of an academic year.

**Progress Towards Degree**

To ensure that students can begin well their very first term, we began working with our FTIAC class months before their enrollment and the start of fall term. Beginning in May with the first orientation, a team of advisors reviewed each student’s record to determine proper placement into the required English, Math and program pre-requisites and suggested the courses for which the students would register at orientation. This document was sent through email to students prior to their orientation dates. Copies of this letter were also provided to students on the day of orientation to assist in the registration process. This process worked well in terms of giving students an idea of what classes they might be taking their first term. One issue that arose was that the team creating the schedules were not advisors who were assigned to the students that would be advised at orientation, leading to revisions being made by the lead advisor for each subset of freshman the day prior to the orientation day. This required each lead advisor to block out time to review the letters to ensure accuracy on the day before orientation. To avoid this issue for the incoming 2019 class, the team was expanded to include the lead advisor for each subset as well as the original team creating a team of six advisors, rather than three. This team is already in place and working with the incoming 2019/20 freshman class. This change has already proved to more effective and less time-consuming in getting students registered for their first term on orientation day.

One other issue was that many students had not activated their WSU email addresses, so some students never received the letter specifying their courses prior to orientation. For the 2019/20 cycle, letters are being sent to students via US Mail that include directions for activating their email accounts, having transfer credits and AP/IB scores sent, followed by an email message specifying course selections based on ACT/SAT scores.

As a result of this issue, the UAC decided to make some changes to how we communicate with our incoming freshmen to prepare them for a successful first term. We now include a communication by US Mail prior to an email communication, informing them how to activate their WSU email and prepare for orientation. We have already implemented the plan beginning with our May orientation date.

Return rate and academic standing are crucial factors in assessing students' progress towards degree from first through third term. Six advisors assigned to freshman students pursuing pre-professional and exploratory programs tracked return rates from fall 2018 to fall 2019 and reported on probation rates as measures of students' progress towards degree. Completion rates for BC and QE courses and progress in the professional school pre-requisite courses also contribute to overall progress towards degree and will be reported within separate categories.

Overall return rate for our fall 2018 cohort of 657 students to winter 2019 was 90.43% for the exploratory population and 87.1% for our pre-professional students. Return rates for fall 2019 as of June 6 was 51% for exploratory students and 57% for the pre-professional students groups. This rate was similar to that of 2017-2018 academic year at 55.65% for exploratory and 52.40% for the pre-professional population.

For the 2018-2019 cycle, probation rates remained under 20%. However, there was some improvement for the pre-professional students. For the 2018 AY, the rate improved to 16.39% compared to 19.83% in the previous year. For the exploratory population, the percentage of students on academic probation increased to 19.13% from 16.13% in the previous year.

**Communication plans**

In an effort to be more intentional and effective in our messaging to students, the UAC advising staff created communication plans detailing timing and content of messages sent to student throughout the academic year. The plans were created by each advising teams specifically for their assigned populations: Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences, Pre-Professional, Pre-Nursing, and Exploratory. The message content and timing of each differed by program. We found that although some of these plans covered the basic information, they didn’t cover all of the communications being sent by our advising staff. For the upcoming year, we will be revising these plans to incorporate more of the messages we send students in a more coordinated way.

**Competencies**

Judging that completion of BC and QE are key to on-time graduation, we use these markers to assess a student's progress towards degree in both the exploratory and pre-professional populations. we assessed the percentages of fall 2018 FTIAC's served by the UAC who have completed Basic Composition and Quantitative Experience by 30 credit hours.

1. **Basic Composition (BC)**

Looking at the whole population it appeared that 74.84% of the exploratory population had met the BC requirement with 77.05 of the pre-professional population having met the requirement. Looking a little closer and using the 30 credit hour criteria established by the University the numbers were substantially were higher. When calculating based on this 30 credit hour criterion, 97.72% of the pre-professional and 95.59% of the exploratory students had met the BC requirement by the established timeline.

1. **Quantitative Experience (QE)**

Looking at the whole population it appeared that 59.46% of the exploratory population had met the QE requirement and 58% of the pre-professional population had met the requirement. Looking a little closer and using the 30 credit hour criterion established by the University the numbers were substantially higher. When calculating based on this criteria, 78.72% of the pre-professional and 82.08% of the exploratory students had met the QE requirement by the established timeline.

Our percentage for BC was higher than the previous year. We attribute that to our outreach to students prior to orientation, focusing one crucial courses for first term. For exploratory students there was an increase of 8.2% with an increase of 8.45% for pre-professional students completing Basic Composition. There is no baseline for QE, since this requirement was not implemented until fall 2018.

For the 2019-2020 AY, we have added another step to our outreach regarding BC and QE. We found that many students had not activated their WSU email accounts and so had not received our welcome letter and list of recommended courses we sent them prior to orientation. As a result, our outreach for the 19-20 AY is to send students the welcome by US Mail detailing important information they need prior to orientation. One of these important details is the recommendation to activate their WSU email in order to receive crucial information from the University. This letter will be sent out about 10 days prior to their individual orientation dates, followed by an email with suggested courses based on SAT/ACT scores and academic program three to four days prior to orientation. Copies of these letters will also be handed out to students at orientation to facilitate registration.

The UAC staff will continue to encourage students to fulfill BC and QE in our one-on-one advising sessions in the students' first semester, if they have not yet completed the requirements or registered for the courses, communicating the expectation that BC and QE be completed by 30 credit hours.

**Exploratory Student Program**

Freshmen exploratory students are first advised by members of the exploratory advising team at freshman orientation and are introduced to the features of the exploratory program. A recommendation for follow up appointments is made at orientation for the 3rd through 7th weeks of the term with each student. During these first appointments, students are introduced to web-based and print materials to assist them in identifying interests, talents, skills, strengths. Follow up appointments are scheduled with students as needed throughout the first two terms as well as email communications as students near the 30-credit hour mark.

Exploratory workshops are conducted throughout the term is assist student in identifying interests, talents, skills, strengths as an important step in finding a major/program that fits. Readiness to declare is assessed at the end of the workshop.

We tracked the percentage of exploratory students who have declared a major or identified a professional program by 30 credit hours. A communication plan was created and implemented for this assessment cycle in an effort to ensure timely communication of crucial messages over the course of the academic year to assist students to make a decision regarding a major/program in a timely way.

Of the 230 students who entered WSU under one of the exploratory categories, 119 (52%) had officially declared a major by S/S 2019. This is based on the entire population. Not all of the students have achieved the 30 credits at which they are required to declare. When accounting for only those student who have achieved the 30 credit hour threshold, only 19 students are still coded exploratory yielding a rate of 82.8% declared at the 30 credit hour requirement.

Students not meeting the deadline to declare a major will be and invited to meet with the exploratory advisors to officially declare a major. Students who have achieved 45 credits and have not declared a major will be contacted and a Must Elect Major hold placed on their record preventing registration for a subsequent term. In addition, the communication plan implemented for the AY 2018-2019 will be revised to reflect additional messages to students at crucial points in the academic year.

**Pre-Professional Student Population**

Our pre-professional students included Pre-Nursing, Pre-Pharmacy, Pre-Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Pre-Mortuary Science, Pre-Radiologic Technology, Pre-Physical Therapy, and Pre-Social Work. Beginning with freshman orientation, students were first introduced to the program requirements for the various pre-professional programs at orientation advising sessions lead by members of the Pre-professional advising team. Prior to the session, a team of advisors reviewed each student's record and indicated the appropriate courses for first term on the student's advising sheet and emailed this sheet to the students prior to orientation. In addition, the lead advisor double checked the suggested course sheet on the day prior to orientation and made any needed corrections. They also made a presentation to the group about the competitive nature of the programs and encouraged students to adhere to the advisors' suggestions for classes to best prepare for the desired program. Students were encouraged to make follow up appointments scheduled for the 3rd through 7th weeks of the fall term to receive additional information and to check in as to how they are adjusting to college and to answer any questions about their courses.

Pre-professional students are expected to demonstrate understanding of requirements of their respective programs by enrolling in and completing pre-requisite courses each term with competitive (B or better) grades. The five advisors assigned to this population tracked completion of the appropriate courses and monitored grades in the pre-requisites and report each term. Communication plans were created and implemented for this assessment cycle in an effort to ensure timely communication of crucial messages over the course of the academic year. Communication plans will be reviewed and updated to reflect regular messages sent to students related to information items that were not a part of the original communication plan, thought to be important.

Advisors assigned to the pre-professional students tracked progress in pre-requisite science courses using the B or better standard, as well as enrollment in the appropriate courses. The courses tracked were BIO 1510, BIO 2870, CHM 1220/30, and CHM 1020.

At the end of fall 2018 term, 12.88% had completed at least one pre-requisite science course with a B or better grade. By the end of winter 2019 the percentage increased to 53.63%. The rate of completion, however, is somewhat higher than the numbers represented, as courses completed by AP, IB, or transfer credit do not carry grades, so aren't accounted for in our results.

Students not enrolling in the required sciences for their respective professional programs will be contacted and advised into other non-competitive majors. Students who have not completed at least one pre-requisite course with a B or better by the end of winter term will be contacted by their assigned advisors to discuss the student’s academic issues, assess the likelihood of admission to the professional program, and prompted to change their majors to a non-competitive academic major in order not to delay graduation, if deemed necessary.

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| **Pre-Nursing Update**  In March of 2018, the advising for Pre-Nursing students was reassigned to a new team of advisors in the University Advising Center (UAC) and set apart from the general pre-professional advising group. Shortly after, a university-wide Pre-Nursing Action Team was convened with representatives from the College of Nursing, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Career Services, and the Office of the Provost, along with the advising team from the University Advising Center (UAC) and the UAC Director.  Prior to this change in advising personnel, Pre-Nursing students were advised by the UAC up to the point of application, and the College of Nursing offered monthly information sessions. There was little formal coordination between the UAC and the College of Nursing. With the advent of the Pre-Nursing Action Team, new initiatives were discussed and formalized, strong connections between all of the parties with a vested interest in the Pre-Nursing (PNUR) students were made, and actions to address deficits were begun.  The goals of this team are to: launch pre-nursing freshman in a better way; to better coordinate and align advising for pre-nursing students; create a coordinated practice of support for pre-nursing students; boost the academic success, graduation rates, and career success of pre-nursing students; and to assess transfer student success support and onboarding. Implementation of these goals is what the UAC pre-nursing team’s main activities seek to support.  As a part of our assessment practice for the past year, we tracked progress towards degree by collecting data regarding completion of Basic Composition, Quantitative Experience, pre-nursing pre-requisite sciences with competitive grades, and Academic Probation. In addition to these items our assessment activities included a communication plan.  This communication plan is designed to send targeted messages at crucial times during the students’ first and second terms, both for our freshman and sophomore students. In addition to the formal communication plan, messages are regularly sent on an “as needed basis” when information not covered in the plan is made available. These messages include those related to course registration, academic probation, workshops, information sessions, alerts, etc.  The Pre-Nursing advising team has also implemented two workshops to supplement the College of Nursing information sessions. Titles of the workshops are “Pre-Nursing Essentials” and “Perfecting Your Nursing Application Essay”. These workshops are offered multiple times each semester and are well- attended. In addition, print materials have been created to support our advising sessions.  With the implementation of our Advising Works platform it is possible to create success markers for the Nursing pre-requisite courses. This allows the advising team to follow up on students based on success markers. With this information readily available, the advising team can communicate with students not meeting the criteria for admission to the Nursing program to work with them to identify alternative majors in which to earn a degree. These success markers have recently been updated by the Pre-Nursing Action Team to align with the admission criteria for Nursing.  Students who are not tracking based on these success markers are contacted and invited to meet with their respective PNUR advisor. In an effort to make sure all of these students can make appointments in a timely manner, the team will meet with any PNUR student regardless of advisor assignment. Working closely with the College of Nursing, as updates are made regarding pre-requisite courses and rules for repeats and CLEP exams, we advise students how they may remedy their deficits, if possible. Students who are not tracking and cannot qualify for admission are encouraged to identify a major in which they could earn a degree. With only 60-80 students admitted to the College of Nursing each year, this is crucial.  Knowing that the College of Nursing is competitive and that not all of the students who are qualified will gain admission, the advising team discusses alternative programs with all of our students, including parallel programs—that is pursuing an academic major concurrently with completing pre-requisites for nursing.  We encounter students at all levels of coursework, so this is especially important for students who are beyond their second year at the University. In addition, we have created a grid detailing other four-year schools of nursing and encourage students to plan to apply to more than one school of nursing.  The Pre-Nursing Action Team has made it a goal to ensure that students who are not tracking do not languish in the Pre-Nursing category, but progress to complete a degree from Wayne State University. Recognizing that with a degree, students have a better opportunity to improve their lives and are better able to pay back loans they may have received, the Team has made a decision to place registration holds on students with 45 credits or more who are not tracking in the pre-requisite courses.  Our first set of holds will be placed for winter 2020 after the fall 2019 census date. Messages will be sent prior to the opening of winter registration informing students of the need to declare an academic major.  The goal of advising pre-professional students who are not progressing into academic majors is also a priority for our entire UAC pre-professional advising team. However, there is no plan to place registration holds on these students at this time.  **Future Plans**  Some of the plans for next year include creating an Exploratory Pre-Nursing admission category and to change the message at orientation to indicate that Pre-Nursing is one option within the larger health care field to broaden our students’ perspective of possibilities. Although this coding is not yet in place, for fall 2019 orientation sessions and one-on-one appointments, this message is being delivered to students by the advising team. We also plan to update our communication plans for more standardized messages at appropriate times during the term.  Compiled and completed by  Anita Carter  Assistant Director, Assessment  University Advising Center |