Advisement and Registration Council Year-End Report

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The Advisement and Registration Council worked hard to fulfill our charges. In doing so, we held a faculty forum on advisement at which other institutions' models of advisement, as well as recommendations made by a consultant, were presented. We also held a focus group on improving degree audit in Banner.

At the forum, three questions were posed to focus discussion. Questions, general responses, and additional issues were as follows:

1. Should WPU reconsider using the Alternate PIN for students in good standing?

    - The majority of faculty at the forum indicated that it the Alternate PIN is desirable and should not be eliminated. Reasons for keeping the PIN number included that it guarantees that students will be in contact with advisors; that even students in advanced standing sometimes take inappropriate courses; historically, students often took far more credits than needed to graduate because they were not properly advised, and doing away with the PIN "could bring us back to that".
    - While many attendees expressed the need to keep the alternate PIN, several felt that the PIN should not be necessary for students in advanced standing, i.e. Juniors and Seniors. The developmental advisement model that was intended when the PIN was put into place was never fully implemented, and instead, the PIN *causes* students to see PIN as barrier rather than see advisor as mentor.
    - The suggestion was made that once an advisor gave student their PIN, the student would in essence be cleared to register so that they would not need to re-contact advisor if they lost their PIN. Additionally, once a student registers for a semester, they should not need to re-enter PIN to add/drop/change courses.
    - Advisors need to get the Alt Pin earlier in the term—getting it too close to registration causes problems
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2. Should decisions about how advisement is conducted be made at the departmental level?

- Responses to this were mixed. Some thought decisions about advisement should be at the school/college level, rather than at the department level, since students frequently change majors, and if there is inconsistency even within a college, there would be too much inconsistency university wide. This would be very confusing for students who change their major.
- Others felt strongly that decisions should be at the departmental level: Departments differ widely in number of students, leading to some advisors having over 100 advisees. Because needs of departments vary, decisions should be decentralized.
- Departments already differ in terms of what they are doing: Some departments offer group advisement on scheduled days. Others have an unwritten policy that students can meet with any advisor – which is convenient for students, but does not lead to relationship building.
- Not all advisors *want* to advise, and therefore departments should make the decisions about how remuneration is distributed. Professional advisors might be a solution; several attendees felt that this would be a good idea.
- Some departments have an advisement coordinator who gets release time, which amounts to a professional advisor on the department level. The system works well in those departments.

3. What other suggestions do you have for improving the existing system of advisement and registration?

- Quality of advisement differs widely: Many advisors engage in developmental advisement while others do not advise at all.
- Advisement system has not been properly assessed. We need a comprehensive study, data on faculty/advisor concerns, not just students' dissatisfaction
- Students in most need of advisement don't seek advisor's help. Students in good standing are most likely to contact advisors.
- Better communication is needed university wide about curricular changes. Perhaps a monthly newsletter from the Provost's office about changes would help.
- Most faculty are not well trained.
- Better training is needed with new GE requirements coming; articulation agreements.
- There are significant issues with Banner and the electronic system in general (Banner is not up-to-date, degree audits are inaccurate)

At the focus group on improving Degree Audit in Banner, several suggestions were made. These have been submitted to IT and the Registrar's office.

1. Course waiver/substitution forms should be electronic rather than paper. Papers get misplaced and then not entered; chairs/deans should be able to enter these approvals directly.

2. Faculty 855 numbers should be removed from transcript/degree audit print outs.

3. Degree audits for students with double majors should show the same information for both majors/both degree audits. As it is, students are given different information depending on which advisor (which major) they speak to. Degree audits for double majors should be unified.

4. It is confusing to have two options of degree audit types (general versus detailed) and it would be a better idea to JUST have the general.

5. It would be helpful to have additional color coding, i.e. adding salience to courses needed for major(s), GEs, electives.

6. Do we need so many screens where we enter our information (you have to choose faculty, then advisor, etc)?

7. Can we generate another document that just says what the student STILL NEEDS to take?

8. Make it easier to find Non-Western courses, i.e. by having them under their own listing, or by somehow identifying them when students try to register.

9. The Advisement Committee should conduct focus groups at the chairs council meeting.

10. It would be helpful to be able to know if a transfer student has an A.A. degree from a community college.

11. The university needs an online declaration of minor form similar to the declaration of major form.