

# Advising Task Force, 2006-07

## Report and Recommendations: May, 2007

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### Preamble

This committee first convened in September of 2006, at the behest of the provost, to pursue the following charge:

"This task force will seek consensus on what advising at Washington and Lee should encompass. Its initial tasks will involve:

- Exploring the distinction between general education advising and major advising
- Exploring the distinction between registration and mentoring (that is, password-dispensing versus sustained advising as a form of teaching)
- Finding out what students want from the system
- Asking what faculty think students need from the system
- Researching best practices at other schools, reading articles on advising
- Investigating how the results of the advising system might be measured
- Discussing possible incentives and rewards for good advising

"In the second phase of its work, this committee will determine how best to articulate the goals and successes of the advising system to all members of the university community. It will also make recommendations about policies that might improve the advising system and/or make it more equitable. Committee members will deliver a report on the advising system, including any recommendations for its improvement, to the provost, faculty, administration, and interested staff. It may also produce documents such as the following, depending on the conclusions drawn by the group:

- A web page and/or a concise handout coordinating resources and assistance for advisers
- A mission statement for the advising program."

We began by discussing among ourselves what an ideal advising system might look like, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of our current practice. Over the five subsequent months, we consulted academic literature concerning advising, especially from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA); examined the practices of peer institutions; located and studied relevant data that the university had already collected (from The Class of '94 Senior Exit Survey, the Class of 2005 NSSE, and the Class of 2006 Senior HEDS Survey); held discussions with students and faculty; had conversations with the president, provost, and undergraduate academic deans; and surveyed the undergraduate faculty.

We conclude that Washington and Lee already has the **right kind of academic advising system** for a liberal arts institution because it fosters close working relationships between faculty and students. This interaction is the distinguishing virtue of small colleges, which otherwise cannot compete in resources with large research universities. Further, our system is already full of highly desirable redundancies: students can obtain career advice, for instance, not only from their official advisers but from many other professors and from Career Services; Student Life and Health Services work hard to acculturate our students and support them in major transitions, just as academic advisers do.

By objective measures, **our current practice is successful**: student satisfaction with initial advising is good, especially compared with satisfaction rates at other colleges; student satisfaction with major advising is even better. By far the majority of students navigate the requirements for graduation successfully. We are also successful in attracting and retaining faculty who understand the importance of advising to the health of this institution. According to our recent survey, almost all of our undergraduate faculty agree that quality advising is important to them personally.

However, we also find **room to improve our current system**. In particular,

- the advising system does not have a mission statement, a clear set of goals according to which its strengths and weaknesses can be assessed
- faculty in particular express great uncertainty about whether or how much advising "counts" in evaluation and promotion
- advising is inconsistently described as teaching and as academic citizenship
- information about crucial resources is dispersed across our web sites, and sometimes difficult to navigate
- no one office is clearly answerable for the big picture.

Our system would be much stronger if we clarified its mission; articulated its goals consistently and frequently; made certain all our practices supported the system's goals; and built greater accountability into its operation.

We therefore offer:

- **Part I: Recommendations** - a list of adjustments to the current system that will improve its effectiveness (page 2);
- **Part II: Description of the Current Academic Advising System** - with summaries of the data we have gathered [Subcommittee: David Leonard (chair), Doug Cumming, Rob Straughan] (page 5);
- **Part III: What Our Peers Are Doing** - a description of the national context [Subcommittee: John Knox (chair), Jan Hathorn, Janet Ikeda, Beverly Lorig] (page 9)

## **Part I: Recommendations**

Our first recommendation—the one that underlies and supports all the rest—is that the university adopt a **mission statement** for the academic advising system. This statement should be brief and clear and widely available; it must harmonize with the mission statements of the College, the Williams School, and the university as a whole. We therefore offer a provisional mission statement here.

### *The Mission of the Academic Advising System*

The academic advising system is fundamental to undergraduate education at Washington and Lee—it is, in fact, some of the most important work we do. The academic advising system should:

1. Provide resources for students as they seek not only to meet graduation requirements, but also to become liberally educated human beings, well-developed in both intellect and character;

2. Encourage students to take responsibility for their own educations and academic actions;
3. Foster conversation among students and faculty beyond the classroom; and
4. Help students to explore and serve a larger world through study abroad, community service, postgraduate education, and the commencement of productive careers.

The advising and mentoring of students is integral to all faculty members' duties as teachers and academic citizens. While good advising can occur in many contexts, through formal and informal relationships, the expertise and availability of initial advisers and major advisers are critical to the system's success. Washington and Lee teachers therefore balance moderate numbers of advisees with reasonable course, committee, and administrative responsibilities: we recognize that faculty time is one ingredient crucial to excellent advising.

To serve these goals and foster these best practices, we offer two broad categories of recommendations. First, the university community would benefit from clearer and more consistent **information** about the goals of the advising system and its ideal practices. Second, we need to improve **accountability and equity** within the system.

## **I. A INFORMATION**

We need to articulate at every opportunity and in every medium that academic advising is central to the university's mission. It should be discussed in faculty hiring; annual evaluations, promotion, and tenure; and in print and web resources. More specifically:

1. Change the label for "freshman advising" or "initial advising" to "**liberal arts advising**," to emphasize college as a time of intellectual exploration through and beyond Foundation and Distribution Requirements and other "mere" graduation expectations.
2. **Develop handouts** for orientation that list, on one side, the faculty responsibilities and, on the other side, the student responsibilities in the advising relationship.
3. **Coordinate resources on the university's web pages.** Currently most of this information is clustered on the university registrar's site, and parts of it are difficult to absorb because they consist of large blocks of text; the more logical place would be the provost's page, but that is difficult to find. Instead, we recommend a prominent link on the left-hand tool bar on the university's main web page, with an easily remembered URL (e.g., "*advising.wlu.edu*") and maintained by the provost's office. This should contain:
  - the mission statement for the academic advising system
  - links to the one-page handouts described above, in point #2
  - easy-to-scan lists of contacts and referral information for department and program heads; student life; career services; health services; international studies; fellowships and grants
  - a month-by-month calendar suggesting opportunities, deadlines, etc. that faculty and students ought to discuss, or events (such as the majors fair) that students ought to attend
  - archives of general resources: articles on advising, brief essays and checklists written by master advisers at Washington and Lee; summaries of relevant faculty academy sessions
  - a summary of related policies: how faculty sabbaticals affect advisees, for example, and how faculty should redirect their advisees as their leaves approach
4. The provost's office and/or the office of the university registrar should develop a list of **e-mail prompts for advisers**, similar to the calendar described in point #3: for example, "Did you know that sophomores will be required to declare their majors by [date]? Now is the time to make appointments with your second-year advisees about their options, plans, and aspirations."

5. We find some differences within the faculty and within the committee on the **ideal relationship between advising and actual course registration**, especially for first-term freshmen. On the one hand, new students can be quite fearful of the process and they need help sorting through concrete choices; on the other hand, our current method throws emphasis on advising as a mechanical activity rather than a substantive conversation about academic choices and their consequences. The Registration and Class Schedules Committee ought therefore to study whether or not we have the best possible system. It might consider the following in particular:

- Explore the possibility of changing the process by which first-term freshmen and other new students register. For example, could freshmen meet with their advisers for advice on first-term courses but then do the actual registering themselves? Actual registration might occur in various computer labs, with trained students (perhaps dorm counselors) and volunteer deans, faculty, and staff posted nearby to help with the technical side.
- Replace the password system for registration with a simple check mark by an adviser on a web page with advisees' names, indicating that students have consulted with their advisers and have permission to register.

6. The provost's office and/or the office of the university registrar should **collect data and report systematically on advising** so that regular adjustments can be made and the next review of academic advising can evaluate the success of these recommendations. These data should be both quantitative and qualitative: the numbers of advisees per faculty member and department and levels of satisfaction among students and faculty.

## **I. B ACCOUNTABILITY AND EQUITY**

We must **define who owns the academic advising system** and **how faculty are evaluated** on this work. Our practices and even our key handbooks and documents are inconsistent on this point. Currently, the dean of the College treats advising as teaching, as the Faculty Activities Report categorizes it; the FAR requires faculty to check off boxes if they advise freshmen and majors, and some faculty self-report their numbers of advisees in this space. The dean of the Williams School, on the other hand, treats advising as academic citizenship, as the *Faculty Handbook* categorizes it; he uses numbers of official advisees as reported by the university registrar and collected by the associate dean of the Williams School. We must be much more consistent in our practices. More specifically:

1. The provost must resolve whether advising should be treated as **citizenship or teaching**. Truly, it has aspects of both. Some of us favor treating advising as a kind of teaching because it emphasizes the centrality of good advising to our academic mission—that it is not an option, an add-on, but intrinsic to our jobs here. However, in the survey we conducted, a majority of faculty recommended that it be treated as service. In either case, however, the FAR or the handbook must be revised, and the deans ought to reward this activity consistently, agreeing upon what weight advising ought to receive in salary deliberations.

2. The deans' offices ought to receive annually from the university registrar **quantitative breakdowns of who does the academic advising** and forward this information to each department and program head (ideally before annual faculty evaluations and Declaration of Major forms are due). Department heads should be instructed to steer new majors away from overburdened advisers, towards faculty with lighter loads. They should also be reminded to speak to faculty members with impending sabbaticals about formally and appropriately redistributing their advisees.

3. **Expand the pool of initial advisers to include interested physical education and library faculty and select staff and administrators**. They must receive training, but they are well qualified and at least in some cases eager for the job, and their participation would make the initial advising program significantly easier to administer. If faculty have three new initial advisees each year instead of five or six, they will have significantly more time to spend with each individual.

4. We recommend **official guidelines for the total number of advisees** a faculty member might work with effectively: no more than four or five per year, or a total of 20 overall, unless a department has too many majors to manage such a limit. Some faculty are excellent advisers but when they go on leave, their heavy loads must be shifted to colleagues, causing an unfair burden; advisees can be particularly hard to redistribute when a large number of them come from one graduating class. We note that faculty returning from sabbaticals may therefore advise fewer total students than professors at the end of the leave cycle, and that other situations (an overload of service assignments, an impending parental leave, etc.) may justify relatively low advising loads for individual faculty members. New faculty should begin advising gradually.

5. Publicize **regular procedures for shifting the advisees of faculty on leave**, in order to alleviate confusion. If a professor is on leave for one term, working mostly on campus, he or she might keep advising IF he or she desires to; otherwise professors should contact all advisees before the sabbatical year and seek to place them officially with other colleagues, using the department head's information on advisee load as a guide, and not neglecting the official paperwork or the transference of files.

6. Just as first-year faculty are required to attend special orientation sessions, second-or-third year faculty, as they begin initial advising, should be required to attend **training** sessions on advising.

7. We should improve training for all advisers and treat it as ongoing **professional development**. Faculty Academy is one good forum for this, but we should also consider special seminars, outside experts, and working groups. These might be limited to small groups annually and attract participants with incentives such as small stipends or course releases. For example, we could create advising training "cohorts" – small integrated groups of faculty in years 1-4, for instance, who meet twice per semester to receive training or discuss issues related to teaching and advising.

8. Increase the number of **recognized advisers for post-graduation opportunities** (for professional schools, graduate schools, and post-graduate fellowships) and, when appropriate, provide teaching releases to honor and enable that work.

9. Since faculty members are expected to be active, engaged, and competent advisers, and since advising plays a role in evaluations of faculty performance, the provost and deans must **communicate** this much more clearly than at present. Further, the provost and the deans must develop a more **standardized process for assessing and rewarding advising activities**. Assessment should address quantitative and qualitative aspects of advising, and encompass formal as well as informal advising activities (e.g., serving as an initial and/or major adviser to students; writing letters of recommendation; organizing and/or attending special advising events such as majors fairs, majors' sessions on graduate school applications and interviews, career networking events for students).

Ideally, this assessment process should reinforce to faculty members that Washington and Lee values the advising role; it should reveal a richer picture of advising activities to administrators who are evaluating faculty performance; and it should be utilized consistently in evaluations across departments and colleges. It should provide added detail about advising activities but should not carry a significant additional reporting burden for faculty members. For example, we suggest that the advising question on the FAR, instead of merely asking faculty to self-report *whether* they advise, should prompt them to describe briefly their formal and informal contributions to the advising system.

## Part II: Description of the Current Academic Advising System

Faculty members serve important roles in their students' lives, not only as teachers and mentors but also as advisers. As well as being an intrinsically rewarding activity which is of great benefit to students, academic

advising is recognized by the University as an important part of a faculty member's "academic citizenship" (see Faculty Handbook, 1998, IX, F3).

Washington and Lee's academic advising system is simple and flexible. Every incoming student is initially assigned an adviser, which he or she may change at any time by completing a form obtainable from the University Registrar. Faculty willing to advise freshmen volunteer each spring through their department heads, and they are assigned advisees by the Dean of Freshmen Program. Faculty advisers in each major are assigned departmentally. All advisers are expected to meet with their advisees at least once a term, prior to registration. New student advisers also meet with their advisees prior to the beginning of the fall term. Most meet more frequently, whether by appointment or on request, and some faculty on occasion invite advisees to their homes. An adviser's signature is needed for any student to drop/add courses, to declare and change a major, and to complete a variety of other forms. Advisers to new students and advisers to those on academic probation receive copies of those advisees' term and midterm grades.

## **II. A AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT PRACTICES**

### *Initial Faculty Adviser*

When possible, the Dean of Freshman attempts to match willing initial advisers with incoming freshmen based upon common interests. Both students and initial advisers are notified of these assignments during mid-summer. In many cases, initial advisers write or e-mail their new advisees to introduce themselves and to encourage the new student to seek answers to any questions.

Incoming freshmen receive a password to access the W&L Registrar's Office web site to pre-register for their fall academic schedule. Some seek the guidance of their initial adviser at this point. All new students are encouraged to carefully review the curriculum information located in the Guidebook for New Students and the University Registrar's website.

On the Monday of Orientation Week, freshmen meet with their initial faculty adviser to review their fall schedule and finalize fall semester registration. In some cases, initial advisers schedule afternoon appointments with new advisees. All initial advisers host their new advisees at dinner that night. The adviser then works with the student the following morning as the student registers for fall classes.

From the time students enter as freshmen until they have declared a major, they are assisted by the initial adviser whose role is to guide the selection of courses that satisfy Foundation and Distribution (general education) Requirements and that permit exposure to elective courses that may help a student to choose a major.

### *Major Adviser*

When students declare a major (no later than the end of winter term of sophomore year), they may continue to work with their initial adviser, if that faculty member works in the appropriate discipline, or else choose a new adviser in their declared field. The role of the major adviser is to help students develop a plan for the timely completion of major requirements, along with any remaining FDR/general education course work. Many major advisers also assist with internship and career planning, graduate school selection, and other post-graduation activities.

### *Adviser Permission for Registration*

Students may only register for courses via the Web after they have obtained their registration password from their academic advisers. Advisers are encouraged each term to meet with each advisee prior to distributing passwords. Advisers are not obligated to give a password to any advisee who has failed to meet with the adviser

to discuss a plan for the upcoming academic term. Beyond the beginning of the freshman year, it is the students' responsibility to schedule advising meetings prior to all Web registration periods to discuss class scheduling options for the upcoming term.

### *Changing an Adviser*

Students can change advisers at any time during their studies by completing the lower portion of the "Declaration of Major, Program, or Adviser" form. The form is available from the University Registrar's office or on the Web site at [registrar.wlu.edu/forms/](http://registrar.wlu.edu/forms/). Changes independent of major/program declaration are unusual.

### *Advising Resources*

New initial and major advisers are encouraged to speak with departmental colleagues, the academic deans of the appropriate division, and the deans in Student Affairs about approaches to and best practices for advising.

The University Registrar hosts a web site offering a wide array of information pertaining to freshman and major advisers. New advisers and veteran advisers alike can find valuable resources pertaining to faculty web services, student web services, curricular advice, general education requirements, departments and programs, and web registration information. Several useful links containing tips, information, and forums for faculty interested in learning more about academic advising can also be accessed through the Registrar's website.

### *Informal Advising*

While the students' advisers of record are a valuable resource, these advisers are not the only source of information for students. Many faculty members serve as informal advisers for students who need assistance related to the particular expertise of that faculty member. This is particularly true when it comes to career and graduate school advising.

### *Who Advises?*

Full-time faculty members serve as academic advisers from their second full year of employment onwards, though some opt out of the process. A few others, such as deans, a librarian, the director of the multimedia center and the two registrars also advise students.

### *Assessment of Advising*

Academic advising at Washington and Lee has been discussed in small group meetings on several occasions during the past two decades, yet comprehensive program assessment has been minimal. Senior exit surveys at W&L provide the only data regarding student satisfaction with academic advisement. A 1994 senior exit survey, *Student Viewpoints*, revealed students expressed considerably more dissatisfaction with their freshman advisers than their major advisers. Students identified lack of advice about general education and about courses and professors in departments other than the adviser's and lack of interest in academic progress as primary sources of dissatisfaction with freshman advisers. Forty-five percent of students were very satisfied or satisfied with freshman advising as compared to 73% satisfaction with major advising. Anecdotal information suggests that these issues still exist today.

Advising results from the HEDS Senior Survey, 2006 found W&L compares reasonably well with six comparable colleges. Sixty-nine percent of respondents said they were generally satisfied or very satisfied with their initial advising (compared to 67%, 48%, 77%, 55%, 7% and 67 %).

## **II. B SUMMARIES OF 2007 OPEN FORUMS AND SURVEY**

The Advising Task Force conducted multiple discussions on how academic advising at Washington and Lee should ideally function and what the strengths and weaknesses of the current system might be. These included meetings with faculty, students, and administrators. Although no one argued that the current system is in collapse, many felt that academic advisement needs enhancement and sharper definition. The Task Force also reviewed exit surveys conducted in the past to attempt to understand the state of advising at W&L. These conversations clarified the system's many strengths and weaknesses.

The strengths of our current system include:

- an emphasis on faculty-student contact – Many felt that the high degree of adviser-advisee contact was consistent with the mission of the university. There were no calls to change this aspect of the system, though some were concerned about the focus on course selection and registration as the primary advising topics.
- a positive experience reported by many students and faculty – Participants are generally satisfied with the system, though many felt that it could be improved.
- a particularly effective system at the major level – There is a higher level of satisfaction at the major level than with initial advising. Many attributed this to the fact that both students and faculty choose to work with each other at this stage, whereas the initial advisers are assigned.
- the resources hosted on the registrar's page – This was viewed as the primary archive for advising related materials.
- funding support for the freshman dinner – This is an example of the university putting resources behind the advising program.
- the informal advising relationships – The support of informal advisers alleviates the need for a given faculty member to know everything about everything. By referring advisees to experts on a particular issue, we leverage the breadth of knowledge on campus.

The weaknesses of our current system include:

- overemphasis on course selection and registration – Many faculty are concerned that they are viewed only as a gatekeeper for registration. There were many who questioned whether the registration process could be altered to allow faculty to spend time with advisees on issues that were thought to be more important.
- a concern that some faculty are clearly not familiar with the liberal arts system or Washington and Lee's mission – In some cases, faculty are using the advising system as a means of recruiting students for a particular class or major and are less interested in working with students whose interests may be elsewhere. This has a negative impact on the initial advising experience.
- a lack of a clear, consistent system for handling sabbaticals – There is no policy in place for reassigning advisees whose adviser is on leave. This is a huge problem when those individuals shouldering substantial advising loads are on leave.
- variance in advising quality – Some faculty members do an exceptional job of advising while others lack skills, knowledge, support, and / or commitment.
- a lack of training and ongoing discussion of the value of advising – Concerns about training for advisers were raised by a number of faculty. In particular newer faculty noted that they were thrown into the system with little or no formal training.
- a need for information regarding the mission of advising, policies and procedures, and roles and responsibilities – Many faculty members noted a lack of clarity about the role that advising plays at W&L. Is it simply about registration or is it something broader?
- a lack of rewards (carrots) and accountability (sticks) for faculty advising performance – this was noted as a shortcoming by many faculty members. Is advising taken into account in annual reviews? If so, is it

teaching or service? There is a strong sense that advising is, at best, a minimal part of the faculty review process.

- a need for clearer expectations faculty and students – It was frequently noted that the expectations for both faculty and students are vague at best. The responsibilities of both advisers and advisees need to be clarified.
- a need for improvement of sophomore advising – As is the case with academic advising at many schools, W&L's sophomores are less satisfied with the quality of advising that are other students. This is an area that needs attention.
- inequitable division of work across both departments and faculty members –There is enormous variation in the advising loads of various departments and individual faculty members. An overview of advising assignments as of fall 2006 revealed the following: 1,763 undergraduate students; students averaged 1.2 advisers; 169 advisers averaged 12.5 advisees with a range from 1 to 43 advisees. Department number of advisees varied greatly as well: Business Administration-157, History-147, Politics-146, English-144, down to East Asian Languages and Literatures-15. Some viewed this as an unfair burden on faculty and departments who were advising well above the average. Others thought that this sort of flexibility to take more or fewer advisees was advantageous.
- a sense that the advising systems lack "ownership" – It is not clear to faculty who ultimately is responsible for the health of the advising system. This may lead to some of the aforementioned confusion over mission, policies, and expectations.

Detailed information on the focus groups conducted with students and faculty over the last several months is contained in *Appendices A and B*. *Appendix C* contains the results of the faculty survey devised by Denny Garvis, Karla Murdock, and Lesley Wheeler and administered by Denny Garvis in early 2007.

During the course of the review, Art Goldsmith, professor of economics shared a General Guide for Advisers working with freshmen and upper division students. The guide is listed in *Appendix D*. Also, John Knox, Professor of Biology, created a succinct list of goals for faculty and students involved in the advising process. These goals are listed in *Appendix E*.

### Part III: What Our Peers are Doing

Provided below, in alphabetical order, are brief summaries of the advising philosophies and practices of some of our peer institutions. Part A describes a survey conducted by Furman University that the Furman registrar, Brad Barron, shared with Scott Dittman. Part B details the practices of some of the mostly highly-ranked liberal arts colleges. The summaries were extracted from information obtained on college websites; taken from correspondence between our registrar, Scott Dittman, and the registrars at other colleges; and a report on advising from Hamilton College. Part C summarizes recommendations recently produced by a committee on advising at Yale; these confirm our sense that the kind of academic advising system we possess at Washington and Lee is the most desirable one, and is the gold standard for the most prestigious institutions.

Our conclusions: we have a faculty-led advising system like our peers and have higher rates of student satisfaction than many of them. However, some schools are much more articulate about the goals and practices of advising than we are (see Amherst, Hamilton, Middlebury, Pomona). We can learn from their practices and their web sites as we improve our own. Furman's report also suggests that compressing initial advising and registration into freshman orientation week is now an uncommon practice.

#### **III. A THE FURMAN SURVEY**

**Furman University conducted a survey of advising and registration practices** of "the best liberal arts colleges in the nation" to prepare for changes in its 2008-2009 calendar. Thirty-four colleges were surveyed,

including 4 of the 14 described in Part B: Carleton, Davidson, Franklin and Marshall, and Washington and Lee. Here is a summary of current practices at these institutions.

A) 23 of the 34 colleges complete registration before students arrive on campus; these tended to be the larger institutions in the sample.

B) On-campus summer registration was used by 9 of 34 institutions. Methods for advising at a distance have been developed by all 34 institutions; there was found to be higher satisfaction with on-site registration.

C) Only 4 of the 34 colleges conducted advising and registration during orientation, immediately before the fall term. These four colleges report having either recently reviewed and rejected, or being currently in the process of reviewing alternatives.

D) Advising done during the summer is mostly carried out by deans' and registrars' staffs, rather than those who advise students during the academic year. When faculty are involved in summer registration they receive additional compensation.

E) Two models used in assigning advisees to advisers: the adviser is chosen from one of the student's instructors, or the adviser is chosen by common academic interest with the student. The adviser-as-instructor model was used by 17 of 34 colleges, while 12 of 34 used the common interest model.

F) "Campuses conducting on-site advising/orientation programs are clearly the most enthusiastic about the benefits of any models we encountered."

G) The highest levels of satisfaction were reported when overall institutional goals were matched with advising and registration practices.

### **III. B OVERVIEW OF PRACTICES AT PEER INSTITUTIONS**

#### **1. Amherst College**

Who advises first-year students? Only faculty; all members of the regular faculty who have at least one year of experience at the institution advise.

How are advisees assigned? They are assigned to faculty after consideration of student interests and aspirations expressed in student portfolios sent to Dean of Freshmen.

When and how do first-years receive advice? During orientation week. Freshmen arrive on Sunday, eight days before Labor Day; on Monday, freshmen meet with advisers to discuss selection of courses; registration occurs Tuesday; meet department representatives that week; on Labor Day advisers meet again with first-years to make adjustments, while opening faculty meeting and college convocation occurs that day too. Classes begin on Tuesday, the day after Labor Day.

Who advises majors? Faculty.

Mission Statement "Engagement with informed advisers who can challenge and contextualize students' intellectual choices ought to be the foundation of a liberal education and especially at a school with an open curriculum...[with] the goal of opening a broad dialogue about the meaning and value of a liberal education."

Other Advisers receive a small stipend for early advising; distance advising is considered "anathema"; all orientation is held on campus. The most frequent complaints from students and faculty pertain to pre-major

advising. "Some students complain that advisers lack adequate knowledge about the full range of Amherst course offerings and majors; some faculty complain about students' cavalier attitude toward conferences and the entire process of planning a course of study."

## 2. Bates College

Who advises first-year students? Faculty.

How are advisees assigned? Not known.

When and how do first-years receive advice? During the first week on campus.

Who advises majors? The major department or program.

Mission Statement "Each Bates student has several advisers during his/her college years...Faculty members provide academic advice...ultimate responsibility for course selection lies with the student. Faculty and students work as partners," in a continuing discussion of the student's goals and responsibilities.

Other A bullet list of adviser/advisee responsibilities and "not-responsibilities" is posted on the college website. Academic mentoring is expected of faculty, but not registering students for courses. Students are expected to take responsibility for their careers, but are not expected to know immediately Bates' requirements and their own goals for Bates and for their career and life.

## 3. Bowdoin College

Who advises first-year students? Pre-major faculty advisers serve each student for the first two years.

How are advisees assigned? They are "formally assigned."

When and how do first-years receive advice? During orientation.

Who advises majors? Major department provides major adviser.

Mission Statement None stated.

Other "Students create advising networks from course instructors, peers, proctors, coaches, and others." Emphasis is placed upon flexibility, student responsibility and initiative.

## 4. Carleton College

Who advises first-year students? Not known.

How are advisees assigned? Not known.

When and how do first-years receive advice? Not known.

Who advises majors? Not known.

Mission Statement "Academic advising is an educational process intended to aid students in making decisions about their Carleton academic careers and lifelong career choices...Students are responsible for pursuing this process as they deem appropriate for their needs."

## 5. Davidson College

Who advises first-year students? Faculty.

How are advisees assigned? Not known.

When and how do first-years receive advice? Students are "required" to consult advisers prior to registration, but precisely what that means, or when that is, is not explained.

Who advises majors? The student chooses a faculty member from his/her major department. That adviser is charged with "assisting in planning how to meet all requirements for graduation and in making plans for their lives after graduation."

Mission Statement Not provided.

Other It is "ultimately the student's responsibility" to know the requirements for graduation.

## 6. Franklin and Marshall College

Who advises first-year students? During the spring before students come to campus, volunteer faculty advisers and a few select administrators provide advice. Once on campus, it is mostly faculty advisers and a few administrators who advise first-years. Peer advisers from the "College House System" also provide advice, though they are not the primary advisers.

How are advisees assigned? Advisers usually teach the freshman-year seminar in which the student is enrolled and are affiliated with the student's house.

When and how do first-years receive advice? Long before students come to campus they are directed to visit the "Beginnings" website where information about courses and registration is provided. In May, first-year students meet on campus for one day with volunteer faculty advisers and a few select administrators to select courses. In early August, first years are notified of their final schedule. A five day orientation occurs shortly before classes begin, during which students meet with faculty advisers and a few non-faculty advisers to finalize course choices.

Who advises majors? Faculty who are assigned by the major department.

Mission Statement Not provided.

Other The Registrar from F&M says, "To ground the student more fully in the idea of a liberal arts education, we're considering having them choose only three courses in the 'Beginnings' phase so they can have a real conversation about the liberal arts with their academic advisers on the day of orientation and choose the fourth course accordingly."

## 7. Hamilton College

Who advises first-year students? Faculty. Students are "guaranteed" this adviser for the first two years.

How are advisees assigned? During summer, before first year students arrive on campus, they are provided an "online tour" of course offerings. They are then asked to express strong interest in a course or "area," and where possible, they are assigned a faculty adviser from that area.

When and how do first-years receive advice? Not clear.

Who advises majors? Not known.

Mission Statement A mission statement was not found, but the new advising system emphasizes that: "Less is More": "the best teaching and mentoring often begins in the same way: understanding students' perspective on the situation, setting forth clear and consistent guidelines, being available as appropriate to help students."

Other In 2000, Hamilton College charged a Task Force with examining advising. David Paris (Prof. of Government) and Timothy Elgren (Prof. of Chemistry and former associate Dean) wrote a summary of the committee process, and the outcome, which is a modestly revised advising system that was employed in 2001. Much more substantive revisions were considered and rejected. Paris and Elgren say that the modest changes enacted have appreciably improved advising and elicited surprisingly favorable responses from students and faculty alike. Objective measures of student satisfaction with the system have risen dramatically and been responsible for a 27% rise in the position of Hamilton's advising system in a national survey.

The title of the report of the Hamilton College Advising Task Force is "Less is More," referring to the finding that by focusing upon what students and faculty actually wanted, and by clarifying these expectations, advising actually involved less, and students and faculty were more satisfied. Students and faculty are now being given more information about the advising system and each other. Hamilton students said they wanted an adviser who will provide accurate information about course selection and college rules; students said they did not seek a mentor. Faculty advisers seem much more satisfied with this limited role as an "academic planning and referral source." Advisers are now given an instruction manual with clearer information about departments and majors.

## 8. Middlebury College

Who advises first-year students? Instructors in first-year seminars are responsible for advising the students in their classes. First-year faculty do not teach seminars, and so do not have advisees.

How are advisees assigned? Students select the seminars that they will take in their first year, and by doing so, they are selecting the instructor of that seminar to be their first-year adviser.

When and how do first-years receive advice? The details of when and how are not stated. The web page suggests that first term advising is done at the beginning of the fall term. An advising guide is given to faculty advisers as well as first-year students.

Who advises majors? The student chooses a major adviser from faculty in the major department, with help, if necessary, from the department chair. This seems to be done at the end of the first year or during the second year.

Mission Statement The following is pieced together from statements made in different parts of the webpage. Middlebury makes the point that there are many redundancies in the advising system, meaning that much informal advising goes on beyond that provided by the faculty who are the primary academic advisers. "Faculty members at Middlebury are teachers and take seriously their advising responsibilities: they are available. They will not intrude, however, and will respect a student's desire for independence. Advising relationships emerge from faculty members' academic expertise and shared interest in student work." Advising students is an important part of a faculty member's responsibilities. "Good active advising depends on the initiative students take to maintain a relationship with faculty mentors."

Other "Faculty sabbatical programs and junior year abroad play havoc with advising."

## 9. Pomona College

Who advises first-year students? Faculty.

How are advisees assigned? The student is "matched" with a faculty adviser. "Relationships with advisers are tailored to the individuals involved."

When and how do first-years receive advice? Advising begins when advisees have dinner with their advisers on the first night of orientation.

Who advises majors? Faculty in the major department, who are selected by the student after the first or second year.

Mission Statement "A student's curriculum is ultimately her or his own choice, and the 'approval' of faculty advisers refers to the process of determining a course of study rather than to the actual selections that emerge from the process. Advisers ensure that students consider their choices carefully and are open to the range of disciplines taught here, without determining the actual outcome."

Other Faculty advisers typically have 10–15 advisees, "few enough to know their students well."

## 10. Swarthmore College

Who advises first-year students? Faculty and a few staff.

How are advisees assigned? Not explained.

When and how do first-years receive advice? Just before first term begins; the registrar at Swarthmore says that they avoid any registration until the students arrive on campus, intentionally to avoid interference in the process by the student's family. Students arrive on campus on Tuesday. Placement exams are given on Wednesday, while mass advising of all first-years in one room is begun on Thursday by the Dean and Registrar. On Friday morning faculty advisers meet with their advisees, and that afternoon the students register.

Who advises majors? The department chair advises majors.

Mission Statement Not found.

Other The biggest problem with advising is that when it occurs, some advisees can't find their advisers.

## 11. Washington and Lee University

A survey of senior opinion called "Seniors Looking Back" reveals that W&L ranks very highly among seven peer institutions for student satisfaction in categories associated with advising: first year advising, major advising, faculty availability outside of class, and student interaction with faculty. In first year advising, 69% of seniors indicated that they were generally to very satisfied; in major advising, 85% were generally or very satisfied, in faculty availability the figure was 99%, and in student interaction with faculty the figure was 98%.

## 12. Wellesley College

Who advises first-year students? Class Deans in collaboration with faculty.

How are advisees assigned? Not known.

When and how do first-years receive advice? Not known.

Who advises majors? Class Deans in collaboration with faculty.

Mission Statement They seem to "help each student make the most of her time" at Wellesley in "choosing a major, deciding whether to stay at Wellesley or to study elsewhere in the junior year, connecting the undergraduate liberal arts experience with possible careers, and defining education in the context of personal and moral development."

### 13. Williams College

Who advises first-year students? All teaching faculty serve as advisers after their first year, and some staff also act as advisers.

How are advisees assigned? The Dean's Office assigns a group of up to four first-year students to each adviser.

When and how do first-years receive advice? Not known.

Who advises majors? Not clear, but Williams says that "certain faculty also serve as advisers to students on graduate schools, fellowships, and career opportunities."

Mission Statement "Advising and mentoring students are considered integral and vital parts of a faculty member's duties as a teacher."

### **III. C. OVERVIEW OF YALE COLLEGE'S ADVISING SELF-STUDY**

What follows are **recommendations** made by the Committee on Yale College Education that were published in the spring of 2003. They deserve mention because they demonstrate that this prestigious research institution seeks to implement the kind of academic advising system for undergraduates that our institution already uses.

Who advises first-year students? Teaching faculty should advise students.

How are advisees assigned? Each first-year student should be assigned a faculty adviser with whom they share interests.

When and how do first-years receive advice? The first advising encounter should occur the day before classes begin, in association that day with an advising fair where department representatives are available to answer questions. Faculty advisers should meet with their advisees, perhaps for lunch, on the day before classes begin.

Who advises majors? By the end of the first year the students should have "secured" a faculty adviser of their choice to be their sophomore adviser.

Mission Statement These statements have been extracted from the Yale report: "Good advising helps students become purposeful seekers of an education, not just skilled pickers of discrete courses or efficient meeters [sic] of requirements...The most productive student/adviser bonds grow out of a shared intellectual experience." Yale is "long" on the mission statement and, according to their own assessment, "short" on providing advising that satisfies the students. Yale reports that more complaints have been heard about advising than any other issue in the college.

## **Appendices**

**[Appendix A](#)**: Summary of Academic Advisement Meeting With Students, December 8, 2006 (page 17)

**[Appendix B](#)**: Minutes from the Academic Advisement Meeting with Faculty, December 14, 2006 (page 19)

**[Appendix C](#)**: Results of Faculty Survey on Advising, February 2007 (page 26)

**[Appendix D](#)**: General Guide for Advising Students – by Art Goldsmith (page 33)

**[Appendix E](#)**: Goals for Faculty and Students Involved in the Advising Process - by John Knox (page 37)

## **Appendix A**

### **Summary of Academic Advisement Meeting With Students - December 8, 2006**

Several members of the Advisement Task Force (ATF) met with a diverse group of students to discuss issues pertaining to academic advisement at Washington and Lee. The students represented all class levels, a variety of different majors, and were engaged in numerous impressive academic and co-curricular endeavors.

#### *Initial Advising*

Most students shared favorable comments about their academic advisers. Several were appreciative of being paired with an adviser in an academic discipline of initial interest. One person shared that he was fortunate to have an adviser that: (a) knew the challenges he would face, (b) made recommendations about a broad array of classes, (c) took the time to get to know him, and (d) most importantly, was not simply self-interested in terms of the selection of courses.

A few students felt they didn't necessarily need an adviser after the initial round of academic advisement from the fall semester; however, the majority of the focus group felt it important to maintain the advising relationship throughout all four years. Several students said they have a strong relationship with their adviser.

One student changed advisers quickly citing her original adviser did not know how to advise her due to the large volume of AP units she brought from high school. Another student shared her adviser knew her respective discipline well, but was not very helpful in terms of advisement in the courses, prerequisites, and disciplines she was most interested in. Most of the focus group agreed that faculty chairs and other members of the faculty were receptive to talking about specific courses, requirements, sequences and academic matters.

Some students received summer correspondence from faculty advisers welcoming them, introducing themselves, etc. Others never heard from their adviser until they met them at the adviser dinner held during orientation week. Most students anticipated close contact with their adviser. Advisers are encouraged to contact advisees during the summer, but many advisers fail to do so. The students who were not notified felt left out and put out.

General sentiment from the focus group was that advisers should be well-versed about other disciplines and serve as good resource-referral agents. Clearly, some students have a strong need for a personal relationship with their adviser, and others prefer greater autonomy due to a deeper knowledge base of the particular disciplines they intend to explore and major in.

A dorm counselor shared concerns that several of his freshman residents were not contacted about their midterm grades by academic advisers. The inevitable question arose - whose responsibility is it to initiate such conversations?

A freshman clarified that when most of his peers inquired about pursuing an easy course, it wasn't to be viewed as trying to find an easy way out; rather it was an attempt to find a schedule of four classes that would be manageable. Freshmen saddled with four very difficult courses such as chemistry, calculus, brain and behavior and a 200-level English or Language are potentially set up for failure from the start. This reportedly occurs often with initial fall term advising and ends up being a looming issue for students as they attempt to salvage their cumulative GPA in successive years. One student suggested the importance of initial advisers understanding the academic background and future interests of the student when selecting general education courses.

## *Major Advising*

One student shared that advisers are initially a little less helpful, but that once you declare a major and are around the department and faculty, the rapport seems to steadily improve.

A few students commented about the relationship their advisers have with one another. It seems that open dialogue about students' interests and well-being certainly contributes to the feeling that W&L is a caring place. For the most part, students reported having a good relationship with academic advisers.

Approximately half of the students in the focus group communicate on a regular basis with their adviser.

## *General Information and Feedback*

Several students shared that upper division students were most helpful in terms of course selection, obtaining candid information about teachers, and gaining a genuine understanding of specific courses. Some students rely upon their adviser and several consult other faculty in terms of "unofficial advising." Some have student peers they consider to be experts on courses of study. Others heavily utilize web resources and the Course Catalog. A few of the students said their initial advisers didn't have a strong knowledge base about the overall curriculum and left students to seek academic answers on their own.

Most students have changed courses even after receiving academic advice from their advisers. The majority of the students stated that they had not received any information from advisers pertaining to international education and study abroad. A few said they pursued this information on their own. Most agreed it would be good to learn about this through their academic adviser.

Students were unaware of fellowship opportunities such as the Truman and Rhodes and said that they were also unaware of academic advisers who discussed such matters with their advisees. The students felt it would be wonderful to be solicited for such endeavors, if indeed they were qualified to apply for such fellowships. Students also wanted more advice regarding community service, volunteering, and applying for internships.

WebRegistration was cited as being positive, other than how PE's are assigned. Contacting the adviser for the password was viewed by most students as an important part of the process. A few students wished they could simply receive their password and by-pass the faculty adviser.

A student mentioned that consistency and a solid general understanding of curricular information among all advisers was important. Students should take the initiative, but will not always do so. Advisers can force the interaction—described by one student as "pleasant coercion." Another student shared that the system works, but revealed some advisers don't seem to take the role seriously. He shared there are discrepancies among what advisers do and do not do and that many students walk away feeling left out. The students clearly recognized some of the current inconsistencies in the advising system.

In summary, the students seemed to approve of the current advising system; however, they expressed reservations about inconsistencies regarding different advisers' apparent preparation and commitment to the role of advising. In general, the students sought more consistent levels of information among advisers concerning courses, the curriculum, resource-referral strategies, and, for the most part, taking an active interest in the academic and personal lives of advisees. The students were inquisitive and asked questions pertaining to how advisers were trained and if they were provided a manual on advising.

**Appendix B**  
**Minutes from the Academic Advisement Meeting with Faculty - December 14, 2006**  
**(names of respondents redacted)**

Faculty respondent:

- Advising is vital – it is as important as anything else faculty do
- As soon as any faculty member doesn't do their job, we all suffer – if you are going to email out passwords, just don't be an adviser
- Too free-floating in current form; too much of a free market in which some students have multiple advisers and others have many, which isn't fair
- System is broken; this is the moment to fix it

**Lesley Wheeler: Goals of advising at W&L - How important is the official academic advising relationship?**

Faculty respondents:

- It is the most important thing I do; if you aren't going to do it right, students will become cynical about it – if faculty aren't going to do it right, they shouldn't be advisers
- Some of the free market system needs to exist, given different fit of students with faculty
- Password system weakens the importance of faculty member in the process; has the computer model reduced faculty importance?
- Important for advisers also to know when they can't answer a question and refer student elsewhere
- Computer is immaterial, because adviser makes recommendations but ultimate choice belongs to student
- Three completely different kinds of advising: freshmen, sophomore (declare major), senior (post graduate issues)
- Wish we would advise at a separate date from registration; technical part of logging on and registering for classes is a minor part of the advising process
- Computer is a help in advising freshmen; password system is a separate thing
- More students now; I have a totally different relationship with freshmen vs. major advisees
- Long ago, freshman advising was more substantive; freshmen now seem to just want to get registration done; I'm not sure if this is good or bad, but this is a change
- Students need to understand that I take the freshman relationship seriously; the ones who don't know that need this relationship the most (they start to sink later and need help)
- When the webreg system initially failed, large group of faculty gathered in the Williams School to help; this felt good and seemed to be effective
- We send a clear message to students about students in the way we introduce advising to them: line up, check boxes, password contact
- We should separate registration from advising
- The problem with advising too many students now is that we meet with them individually, focusing on the paperwork and registration
- Students may not understand the implications of being in a liberal arts institution; perhaps by meeting in small groups and focusing on our understanding of how this place is special
- Small numbers of students work better
- With regard to freshman: students don't know what an adviser is for – in the first week, they most need help with registration, but I ask students to meet with me again in the third week (not all do)

**Lesley Wheeler: How is good advising recognized?**

Faculty respondents:

- We have no idea how much it counts
- We don't have any way of knowing about qualitative aspects of advising
- Solicited letters from students in tenure process are given significant value in the evaluation process; often contain information about special advising
- When we select people on advisory committee, we need to send them a clear message about the importance of advising so that they can act accordingly
- VMI has section on FAR called "Cadet Development" that encompasses overall advising issues
- If there are objectives to the advising system that can be assessed, faculty can be evaluated (performance beyond minimal standard)
- Dangerous to do numerical analysis of advising; numbers are dependent on many factors
- Lots of advising occurs under the radar screen (e.g., advising for fellowships)
- I don't get the sense that the FAR gets read; adding section may not be useful
- FARs do get read by department heads
- We have to link advising with registration
- There should be a limit on the number of advisees each faculty can have, because you can't advise 40 students consistently well (20 is as many as can be done well, e.g. in ½ hour advising appointments)
- Should any faculty members be exempt from advising: Yes, the bad ones – the quality of advising should determine whether a faculty member is engaged in advising
- The issue of how many students can be advised well is an empirical question
- As a liberal arts institution, we should all embrace this mission
- No one should be exempt; if someone is bad at it they need to become competent, and if they aren't competent they should lose in the same way that a faculty member loses for bad teaching
- With regard to freshmen advising, there should be some equity; students of advisers with more advisees may suffer in first bureaucratic hurdle because this adviser cannot advise in timely manner with regard to webreg
- Who is going to decide to tell a faculty member that they cannot advise? How are freshmen assigned to advisers?
- Do best to advise students to major of choice (based on interests expressed in summer form), within constraints imposed by available faculty for advising. This is a feel-good match at the beginning of the process, but it can't always happen (forms arrive late; available faculty runs out within popular major choices). Complicated process.
- FAR does allow for quantitative assessment of advising by recording number of letters of recommendation.
- Is there information about how many faculty are currently exempt from advising?
- There are lots of people who refuse to take on freshman advisees because they are overloaded with major advisees or for some other reason. They let their dept. chair know, who communicates this to Dave Leonard.
- 105 faculty is usually ideal number of freshman advisers.

**Lesley Wheeler: What about the issue of information and support for academic advisers?**

Faculty respondents:

- I don't feel very competent in advising freshmen in terms of telling them what they should be taking, study abroad, etc.
- Workshops are helpful, timeline of advising activities on the web would also be helpful.
- Goes back to conceptualization of what is a good adviser (this is a subjective judgment that differs across people). It really isn't clear how optional vs. required it is for faculty. There are mixed messages, no resolution of fundamental issues regarding what is good advising.

- It is hard to tell who is a good or bad adviser, since the final decision is the student's. When students make mistakes, faculty look bad. There is potential for he said, she said with regard to trouble spots.
- Where is advising listed in the FAR: Teaching vs. Service?
- Mentorship of newer faculty by more experienced faculty is the best form of training. Resources are hit and miss for this type of process, depending on who is available and who cares.
- Reminders of timing of different things that need to happen during the year, communicated via broadcast emails, would be helpful.
- Scott has done a good job of this already.
- Need to keep an eye on how many resources are being devoted to Counseling Center and Student Health Service; those services are crucial, particularly when dealing with freshmen and sophomores – if students can't get help because these offices are swamped, that is a problem.
- We need to reconsider how faculty members first meet their advisees; Individual meetings with students before the dinner have helped, but we need to figure out how to create a beginning social experience to set up their expectations.

### **Lesley Wheeler: Are we asking the right questions?**

Faculty respondents:

- In the review of other top schools, does anyone else wait until students arrive on campus to begin the advising process?
- At Davidson, meeting with the adviser was one of the activities of the first day – parents and students in small groups, which was nice.
- Study abroad advice is coming from faculty; in the freshman advising process, the study abroad office needs to be placed more in the forefront.
- Bad advisers shouldn't be advising, because undoing bad advising is a serious problem: When students haven't decided upon a major, they are often told "Get rid of the Gen Eds" – this is completely inconsistent with the message / mission of a liberal arts institution.
- Once you have a serious requirement for FDR/GenEd, need to advise students to fulfill these requirements
- Some FDRs are meant to be taken early, others are meant to
- It isn't completely obvious that we are
- No major is supposed to be more than 1/3 of the requirements; the major was small,
- If we don't pay attention to the fact that we aren't exactly a liberal arts college that causes difficulty as well.
- If you look at the importance of faculty spending individual time with students and at grade inflation that has happened here:
- One measure of the fact that faculty feel pressured about the time they spend with students is to look at the freshman GPA and SATs over the past 10 years: our students are not better, but they are getting significantly better grades than 10 years ago. This is not directly tied to advising process, but linked to some pressures (especially felt by untenured faculty) regarding performance in scholarship

**Lesley Wheeler: Faculty contact with students from first moments at W&L is important: This group wants advising done by faculty and not by professional advisers. Is this right?**

Consensus: Yes.

Faculty respondents:

- Many students come to be interested in unique W&L programs sort of late in the game; important to help students link with these programs earlier. Advisers need to be better schooled about these programs

or ancillary / service / interdisciplinary programs personnel need to be involved in early advising process.

- Leftover issue from Gen Ed: At a number of our peer institutions, they have tried to link freshman advising and teaching. We get to know students in the classroom. In some places, there is a 1-credit course that all freshman take that segregates those students, puts them in a small classroom with a faculty member who gets to know that group quite well. This idea has been lost here because it is labor-intensive; we already have a heavy course load, etc. However, we could think more about how to link first freshman experience with advising.
- What are the tradeoffs of doing better advising? Better advising amounts to *more* advising.
- I have a series of sheets that I use to streamline the process. Students keep these sheets, come back with them next time. (Will share these forms with ATF)

**Scott Dittman: Should advisers be signing drop-add forms?**

Consensus: Yes.

**Scott Dittman: Whose responsibility is compliance with requirements?**

Consensus: Student. We are responsible for giving good advice, student has right to make blunders.

Faculty respondents:

- I keep a record of everything I advise them to take, and ask them to notify me if something changes.
- Crucial for an adviser to keep a running tally of student's course record. It isn't crucial for me to sign a drop add form, but it provides another opportunity to ask "why", reconsider the implications.

**Scott Dittman: Who should advise your advisees when you aren't available (sabbatical, etc.)?**

Faculty respondents:

- I ask faculty to clear their decks, send on paperwork, and clearly communicate with students.
- I met students before I left, made a plan for the entire next year. I then delegated these students to other faculty in my department and passed on that paper plan to them.
- This raises the issue of a ceiling for advising. When a faculty with a large advising load goes on sabbatical, it creates a huge burden on departmental colleagues who pick up the slack. This is another important reason for equity.
- I gave the paperwork to the students and instructed them to find someone now for the next year.
- It would be important for us to make a plan for this. We need to codify a process of referring advisees for sabbaticals.
- My sense of advising is that there is no relationship between the amount of time you spend with a student and what they get out of it. If we say that you can only have 20, what do you say to the 21<sup>st</sup> person who shows up at your door? What will that student actually do? This all goes back to what do students expect and what do we expect with regard to advising?
- Committee, please think carefully about what happens when we change anything.

**Lesley Wheeler: Does putting a cap on the number of advisees help in terms of equity?**

Faculty respondents:

- Who do we advise? Before we start trying to count this, need to figure out how we define different kinds of advising. The committee might need to parse out freshmen GenEd advising from major advising.

- Major advising is generally more enjoyable than freshman advising, so in establishing equity we can't let major advisers out of freshman advising.
- I have an unpopular suggestion: We should have new professors begin to advise, when they are fresh and eager, and already participating in lots of orientation.
- Perhaps there are other computer methods to register that might be more equitable to the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> advisees of an adviser.
- Quantity of students: The issue of equity boils down to a faculty honor system in terms of what is our community's sense of what the importance of advising is?

### **Follow-up Discussion:**

#### Signing drop/add forms:

Consider role of each person who has to sign the form – what is the purpose for each signature (what are the decision points for each person in a signing role?).

#### One possible model for decoupling registration from advising:

Have group advising sessions in which a group of faculty from different disciplines and at different levels of experience gather with staff from study abroad, etc. to support students in the registration process. Still have individual advisers, who meet with students at non-registration times.

#### Summer advising:

There is a lot of overlap in courses that students initially register for (e.g., English Comp, math, labs); could this effectively be completed during the summer?

#### Mission:

How are we understanding – and communicating – the mission of a liberal arts institution and how that translates into the role of advisers? Are there mechanical elements of the advising and registering system that could be tweaked to more effectively frame our advising relationships with freshmen?

## **Appendix C**

### **Summary Results of Faculty Survey on Advising, Winter 2007**

In order to obtain additional insight from a larger sample of faculty and staff, a survey was conducted by the Committee subsequent to the Forum. Based on Committee discussions and Forum comments, an online instrument consisting of 62 items was developed to gather both quantitative ratings of as well as qualitative commentary regarding views of ideal and actual advising, incentives, and resources. A copy the survey appears below. Conducted in Winter Term 2007, the survey generated 119 responses from a pool of 228 potential respondents for a response rate of 52% (119/ 228). Demographic data indicates:

- 1) 40 female (33.6%) and 79 male (66.4%) respondents.
- 2) 36 respondents (30.2%) with 5 years or less,  
27 respondents (22.7%) with between 5 and 10 years,  
15 respondents (12.6%) with between 11 and 15 years,  
17 respondents (14.3%) with between 16 and 20 years, and  
24 respondents (20.1%) with more than 21 years experience with the University.
- 3) 21 respondents (17.6%) from Accounting, Business Administration, Journalism and Mass Communications, and Society and Professions departments,  
19 respondents (16.0%) from Economics, Politics, Sociology and Anthropology departments,  
17 respondents (14.3%) from Art, History, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Music, and Philosophy departments  
36 respondents (30.2%) from Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geology, Mathematics, Neuroscience, Physics & Engineering, and Psychology departments  
21 respondents (17.6%) from Classics, East Asian Languages & Literatures, English, German & Russian, Public Speaking, Romance Languages, and Russian Area Studies departments,  
5 respondents (4.2%) from Library, Physical Education, and Teacher Education departments.

Summary results of the survey are consistent with the comments made by the Faculty attending the Forum. Although both Initial and Major Advising are seen as crucial to providing a good education in a liberal arts setting, there were clear indications that Initial Advising differs from Major Advising. For example, three clearly identifiable items were highly rated for ideal Initial Advising:

- 1) overseeing course registration (58 Critical and 35 Very Important ratings, 78.2%),
- 2) helping students plan their general education requirements (41 Critical and 55 Very Important ratings, 80.7%), and
- 3) discussing the purpose of liberal arts education (34 Critical and 49 Very Important ratings, 70.0%).

In comparison, the three items that were highest rated as ideal Major Advising were:

- 1) offering advice on graduate school, (50 Critical and 55 Very Important ratings, 88.2%),
- 2) tracking progress towards graduation (50 Critical and 52 Very Important ratings, 85.7%), and
- 3) mentoring the student intellectually (45 Critical and 60 Very Important ratings, 88.2%),

followed closely by

- 4) offering resource referral (41 Critical and 53 Very Important ratings, 79.0%),
- 5) offering career advice (34 Critical and 62 Very Important ratings, 80.6%),
- 6) offering advice on internships (25 Critical and 71 Very Important ratings, 80.6%), and
- 7) offering advice in fellowship opportunities (22 Critical and 70 Very Important ratings, 77.3%).

With respect to the actual practice of and rewards for good advising, 112 respondents (94%) agreed or strongly agreed that good advising was important to them personally and 91 respondents (76.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that good advising was important in their respective departments. However, these results must be tempered by the low levels of agreement that good advising was rewarded by the University (0% strongly agreed, 11% agreed) and part of the discussion conducted during hiring decisions (0.8% strongly agreed, 18.5% agreed). The mixed signals regarding the role of advising heard in the Forum as well as from the Deans were also reflected in the survey. In response to an open-ended question regarding the treatment of advising, 22 respondents (18.5%) felt advising should be considered a Teaching Activity, 56 respondents (47%) felt it should be considered a Service Activity, and 10 respondents (8.4%) felt it should be considered both.

In contrast to responses regarding ideal advising situations, resource issues were similar for both Initial and Major Advising. Faculty experience gained over time was the highest rated helpful resource in both Initial Advising (51 Critical and 52 Very Important ratings, 86.6%) and Major Advising (57 Critical and 44 Very Important ratings, 84.9%), with informal mentorship within departments also recognized as useful (Initial, 25 Critical and 46 Very Important ratings, 60.0%; Major, 29 Critical and 55 Very Important ratings, 70.6%). One difference was found in helpfulness of resources for Initial and Major Advising. Web materials (27 Critical and 45 Very Important ratings, 60.5%) and training (12 Critical and 46 Very Important ratings, 48.7%) were rated more highly for Initial Advising than for Major advising (Web materials, 16 Critical and 28 Very Important ratings, 37.0%; training, 8 Critical and 19 Very Important ratings, 22.7%),

In closing, additional analysis of the data could provide detailed explanations for some of the lingering questions of this study. For example, although 58% of faculty consider overseeing course registration as a crucial element of Initial Advising, this result seems inconsistent with other responses and answers from open-ended questions regarding the linkage between registration and advising. This may indicate some kind of response bias in the first question on the survey. Additional insight may also be gained from formal testing of differences in the responses of female and male respondents, experienced and inexperienced advisors, and of the different disciplinary groups. Finally, the commentary to the open-ended questions, representing a rich source of faculty perceptions of ideal and actual advising practices at Washington and Lee, could be evaluated with additional time.

Full results of the survey are available at \_\_\_\_\_.

## Faculty Survey -- Academic Advising at Washington and Lee University

The following survey has been developed for the Advising Task Force to collect information concerning academic advising at W&L. Please answer all of the following questions. All responses are confidential and anonymous. When you have completed the survey, select the "Send Survey" button at the bottom of the page. If you have a problem with the completion or submission of this survey, contact Denny Garvis at [garvisd@wlu.edu](mailto:garvisd@wlu.edu).

The first set of questions seeks your input regarding <u>the ideal role of academic advising in a liberal arts setting</u> .					
		Rate the importance of each academic advising task using the following response choices:			
		Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Critical
1.	Ideally, an <b>initial (freshman) academic adviser</b> ----- ---- should oversee course registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	---- should help students plan their general education requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	---- should track student progress towards graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	---- should discuss the purpose of liberal arts education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	---- should offer advice on internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	---- should offer advice on international education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	---- should offer advice on fellowship opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	---- should mentor the student intellectually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	---- should mentor the student personally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	---- should offer career advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	---- should provide resource referral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	---- should offer advice on graduate school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Ideally, the <b>major academic adviser</b> ----- ---- should oversee course registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	---- should help students plan their general education requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	---- should track student progress towards graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	---- should discuss the purpose of liberal arts education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	---- should offer advice on internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	---- should offer advice on international education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	---- should offer advice on fellowship opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20.	---- should mentor the student intellectually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	---- should mentor the student personally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	---- should offer career advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	---- should provide resource referral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	---- should offer advice on graduate school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.	Overall, <b>initial (freshman) advising</b> is important in providing a good education in a liberal arts setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	Overall, <b>major advising</b> is important in providing a good education in a liberal arts setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. Please identify other **initial advising tasks** that you think are important that are not listed above:

◀
▶

28. Please identify other **major advising tasks** that you think are important that are not listed above

◀
▶

29. Ideally, should academic advising be considered as a Teaching Activity or as a Service Activity for the purposes of evaluation, promotion, and tenure?

◀
▶

30. Final comments regarding the ideal role of academic advising:

◀
▶

The second set of questions seeks your input regarding **the current practice of academic advising** at Washington and Lee University.

		Rate your agreement with each item using the following response choices:			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
31.	Quality academic advising is ----- ---- important to me personally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	---- is relevant to my professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	---- is encouraged in my department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	---- is emphasized in tenure and promotion decisions in my department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.	---- is relevant in my discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	---- is acknowledged by my colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.	---- is evaluated properly by my department head	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.	---- is rewarded by the University	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39.	---- is part of faculty hiring discussions in my department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40.	The quantity of academic advising is shared equitably (provide comments, if any, at Q43 below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41.	Overall, I am satisfied by the current academic advising system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42.	The current linkage between advising and registration is effective (provide comments, if any, at Q44 below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

43. Please provide your comments, if any, regarding Q40 concerning equity in academic advising

44. Please provide your comments, if any, regarding Q42 concerning the linkage between advising and registration

The last set of questions seeks your input regarding the **helpfulness of resources** for high quality academic advising.

	Rate the helpfulness of each
--	------------------------------

		resource using the following response choices:			
		Not Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Very Helpful	Critical
45.	For <b>initial advising</b> , ----- ---- formal orientation in 1st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46.	---- training sessions, such as those offered during Faculty Academy by the Dean of the College, Dean of Freshmen, and University Registrar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47.	---- the use of support materials on websites such as University Registrar, Dean of the College, and Dean of Freshmen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48.	---- faculty experience in initial advising gained over time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49.	---- informal mentorship by departmental colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50.	---- mentorship by non-departmental colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51.	---- peer mentorship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52.	For <b>major advising</b> , ----- ----- formal orientation in 1st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53.	---- training sessions, such as those offered during Faculty Academy by the Dean of the College, Dean of Freshmen, and University Registrar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54.	---- the use of support materials on websites such as University Registrar, Dean of the College, and Dean of Freshmen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55.	---- experience in major advising over time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.	---- informal mentorship by departmental colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.	---- mentorship by non-departmental colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
58.	---- peer mentorship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

59. What other kinds of support do advisers need to do this work well?

60. In what year were you initially hired at W&L?

- 2002-present
- 1996-2001
- 1991-1995
- 1986-1990

1985 or earlier

61. What is your sex?

Female

Male

62. With which ONE of the following six general groupings do you identify most closely?

Accounting, Business Administration, Journalism & Mass Communications, Society & Professions

Economics, Politics, Sociology & Anthropology

Art, History, Medieval & Renaissance Studies, Music, Philosophy, Religion, Theater

Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geology, Mathematics, Neuroscience, Physics & Engineering, Psychology

Classics, East Asian Languages & Literatures, English, German & Russian, Public Speaking, Romance Languages, Russian Area Studies

Library, Physical Education, Teacher Education

[send survey]

[reset]

**Appendix D**  
**General Guide for Advising Students**  
**by Art Goldsmith, Professor of Economics, Washington and Lee University**

*Advising Freshmen*

"What is a liberal arts college--discuss liberal education (a world of choices)"

What do faculty do at this institution (teach, research, service)

✓ Part of teaching is advising

Explain your role as adviser (help with registration, help them understand how the university functions, help them understand the options for intellectual growth).

"Listen-Learn: Academic Issues to Think about"

Importance of attending class, completing work on time

If you need help, seek it earlier as opposed to later--from course instructor

Peer tutors are available--make use if needed--see me and we can contact Dean Leonard

Are you a strong writer?

Peer writing assistance is available from the writing center--make use if needed

Are you interested in any of the interdisciplinary programs?

Maybe the port-or-entry course to the program can be part of your general education

Balance is important--if you are highly social.

Academic performance matters!

Are you interested in study abroad?

Go see William Klingelhofer, Director of International Education

Are you an athlete? If so, time management is especially important. If you need to talk to a coach about your academic challenges--do so!

"Listen-Learn: About their High School Experience"

Where you involved in service activities or other extracurricular opportunities (singing, dance)?

Is this something you want to do while at W&L?

You can start slow--until you get settled. Get information about Nabors Service League.

Learn about Bonner Leader Program

Are you interested in an interdisciplinary program to augment your major?

## COURSE SELECTION: PRIOR TO MAJOR SELECTION

YEAR IN SCHOOL	FALL TERM	WINTER TERM	SPRING TERM
<b>FRESHMAN</b>	General Education	General Education	General Education
<b>SOPHOMORE</b>	Economics 101 Economics 201 General Education	Economics 102 Economics 203 General Education	General Education

### Standard Schedule

<b>JUNIOR YEAR</b>		
FALL TERM	WINTER TERM	SPRING TERM
Economics 210	Economics 360	Economics Elective #1
Economics 201 if not completed as a Soph./or <b>OPEN</b>	Economics 203 if not completed as a Soph./or <b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>SENIOR YEAR</b>		
FALL TERM	WINTER TERM	SPRING TERM
Economics 390	Economics 399	Economics Elective #2
Economics Elective #3	Economics Elective #4	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	

<b>JUNIOR YEAR</b>		
FALL TERM	WINTER TERM	SPRING TERM
Economics 210	<b>STUDY ABROAD</b>	Economics Elective #1
Economics 360		<b>OPEN</b>
Economics 201 if not completed as a Soph./or <b>OPEN</b>		
<b>OPEN</b>		
<b>SENIOR YEAR</b>		
FALL TERM	WINTER TERM	SPRING TERM
Economics 390	Economics 399	Economics Elective #2
Economics 203 or <b>OPEN</b>	Economics Elective #3	Economics Elective #4
<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	

## Standard Schedule: Junior Year Winter Term Abroad

### Advising Seniors

"Check-Up: Make Sure Mom and Dad have a Reason to Attend Graduation"

Is the student on schedule to meet:

- ✓ Requirement for graduation?
- ✓ Requirements for their major (and interdisciplinary program)?

"Listen-Learn: Professional Goals"

What do you intend to do next year, the year after?

What do you intend to be doing 3-5 years from now?

- ❖ Cheap Advice: Consider taking class(s) to facilitate these objectives.

"Listen-Learn: Personal Goals"

What are your nonprofessional passions (photography, theatre, film, poetry, jazz, philosophy, painting ...)?

- ❖ Cheap Advice: Consider taking class(s) to embrace these joys.

"Listen-Learn: Time Demands and Community Service"

Have you been involved in civic engagement, service learning, and community service while at Washington and Lee?

Do you intend to be involved in these activities in the future?

Would you like to be involved in these activities this year?

- ❖ Cheap Advice: Schedule a meeting with the Community Service Coordinator (Aubrey Shinofeld ). Get back to me and let me know what you decided.

"Listen-Learn: Foreign Study"

Have you studied abroad during your W&L career? If so, was this a positive experience?

Would you like to study abroad as a senior--winter term?

- ❖ Cheap Advice: Schedule a meeting with the Director of International Education (William Klingelhofer). Get back to me and let me know what you decided.

## "A Bit of Preaching: Further Education"

### Learn On-the-Job

- ❖ Cheap Advice: Seek out and ask for training opportunities, attend workshops and seminars.

### Learn Off-the-Job

- ❖ Cheap Advice: Read, attend museums, travel--a wonderful graduation gift is a subscription to the New Yorker (Atlantic, ...).

### Graduate School or Professional School--are they in your future?

- ❖ Cheap Advice: Take course, obtain key experience to ensure you are a competitive candidate for graduate school when the time to apply arises.

**Appendix E**  
**Goals for Faculty and Students Involved in the Advising Process**  
**by John Knox, Professor of Biology, Washington and Lee University**

*Guidelines for Faculty Advisers*

1. Provide sage and friendly counsel on academic matters.
2. Do not be overbearing! Listen well; be patient; try to describe and compare alternatives; give your best advice, but in the end, it is the student's decision to make.
3. Know the academic requirements of the institution, for graduation, GE, and your particular major.
4. Have students consider the workload entailed in the course combination selected each term. Where the work looks to be overly burdensome, suggest that the student consult with faculty who will teach the courses, and/or trusted upper class students, to better understand the tasks that will be expected.
5. The best counsel often may be to refer the advisee to others, who know more about the question, or to consult those others and provide the answers to the student.
6. Ask the student about her/his long-term goals. Listen carefully! Repeat this question each semester, to determine if goals have changed.
7. Ask also about the student's academic and co-curricular interests.
8. Warn the student about short-term and long-term obstacles that should be considered in attempting to achieve her/his goals.
9. Let advisee know that at any time, she/he may change advisers, and how that is accomplished, through the registrar's office.
10. When an advisee's academic interests and needs go beyond the adviser's purview, the student should be referred to other possible advisers in an appropriate department.
11. Study the student's academic record, from high school and as it develops in college as well.
12. Help student anticipate the possibility of study abroad in planning when courses will be taken while at W&L.
13. Freshman students who are planning to continue to study a foreign language, or other subjects that require substantial retention of foundational training, should be encouraged to continue studying the subject as soon as possible.

*Guidelines for Student Advisees*

1. Periodically, ask yourself what are your short-term and long-term goals for your personal and professional development. How do these goals relate to your choice of courses and activities at W&L? Keep a record of these thoughts and other thoughts prompted by the suggestions mentioned below.
2. Using the college catalog and the Registrar's webpage, determine the requirements for you to graduate, to satisfy GE, and to complete your intended major, as well as requirements to prepare for your career, and to meet your intellectual goals.

3. Starting early in your freshman year, and continuing until you graduate, plan when you intend to take courses that will satisfy your academic, career, and personal goals over the entire four years that you will spend at W&L. Consider when and what you might study abroad and how this might impact your accomplishments of academic, career, and personal goals.
4. Consider taking courses that will help you build strength, beyond the minimum required, in areas that will enhance your career opportunities and future intellectual growth.
5. Before each registration period, discuss with your adviser the courses that you intend to take in the coming semester. Ascertain that you qualify to take these courses, gain permission if needed, and determine that the combination of courses is not in conflict. Always consider alternative courses so that you will be prepared, should one or more of your choices fall, before you register.
6. You are responsible for deciding what courses you will take. Your adviser is available to provide advice on how best to accomplish your goals, and to warn you when you may be overlooking some considerations.
7. Do not hesitate to change advisers. You may do so by submitting a request in hardcopy or electronic form to the University Registrar's office.
8. To be effective, your adviser needs to be knowledgeable in the academic area(s) in which you intend to major. Select an adviser who meets this standard. If you have two majors, then consider having one adviser for each discipline.