

1-1-1998

# Departmental Advising Patterns and Recommendations for Change

Linda D. (Linda Darlene) Clark  
*Western Washington University*

Carl Simpson  
*Western Washington University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch\\_docs](https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch_docs)

 Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Clark, Linda D. (Linda Darlene) and Simpson, Carl, "Departmental Advising Patterns and Recommendations for Change" (1998).  
*Office of Survey Research*. 595.  
[https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch\\_docs/595](https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch_docs/595)

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Institutes, Centers, and Offices at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Office of Survey Research by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact [westerncedar@wwu.edu](mailto:westerncedar@wwu.edu).

Departmental Advising Patterns  
and Recommendations for Change

(Report 1998-01)

Linda Clark  
Carl Simpson

January, 1998

**Reports produced by the Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing (OIAT) are distributed routinely to a broad readership, including: Western Washington University administrators, deans, department chairs, offices, units, faculty and staff; assessment liaisons at other Washington State universities and colleges; and selected state government agencies and committees. Moreover, most reports are available by request for additional distribution to individuals, offices, committees, or other units both on and off campus. When presenting statistical information, the OIAT keeps in mind the wide-ranging interests, needs and backgrounds of its readership. Even when analyses become complex, results are presented so as to be readable by a wide audience. For interested parties, data utilized in OIAT reports are available for separate analyses.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ADVISING PATTERNS</b>	<b>1</b>
Need for advising	1
Advising intensity	3
Who does departmental advising?	5
Student reports of advising experiences in relation to departmental reports	7
<b>COMMENTS ON HOW TO IMPROVE ADVISING</b>	<b>8</b>
Should faculty be more involved in departmental advising?	9
Is "faculty mentoring" a possibility?	10
Other suggestions as to how to improve advising	11
<b>CAN WE MEASURE DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SHOULD WE MEASURE DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>13</b>

## TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1. Distribution of current number of majors among the thirty departments who responded to the survey	2
Table 2. Number of departments who say students come to them having decided on the major, and number who say students need advising before deciding	2
Table 3. Proportion of students accepted as majors among departments who responded to the survey	2
Table 4. Proportion of majors who talk with an advisor at the time of declaring a major	3
Table 5. Proportion of majors who develop a written plan of study at the time of declaring a major	3
Table 6. Average number of <u>academic advising</u> contacts in junior or senior year (after major declaration), among departments who responded to the survey	4
Table 7. Average number of advising contacts in junior or senior year (after major declaration) regarding <u>life/career/graduate school</u> , among departments who responded to the survey	5
Table 8. Proportion of staff, faculty and chairs who provide <u>pre-major</u> advising among departments who responded to the survey	6
Table 9. Proportion of staff, faculty and chairs who provide <u>academic advising after declaration of the major</u> among departments who responded to the survey	6
Table 10. Proportion of staff, faculty and chairs who provide advising re: <u>life/careers/graduate schools</u> among departments who responded to the survey	6
Table 11. Do departments favor or reject the possibility of two "faculty mentoring" models?	10
Table 12. How difficult would it be for departments to log/record advising contacts for each of the following three phases of advising?	12
Table 13. Should Western attempt to revise its accountability measure of advising to include "departmental advising"?	13

## **APPENDIX A:**

<b>Verbatim Comments</b>	<b>15</b>
Exhibit 1: Comments as to how faculty are currently involved in departmental advising, ways to get faculty more involved, and ways that departments favor involvement of both staff and faculty in advising	16
Exhibit 2: Comments regarding the possibility of two "faculty mentoring" models: Model I) Faculty mentoring as service, and Model II) One-credit seminars/"interest groups"	22
Exhibit 3: Suggestions as to how to improve advising in general, and to create greater contacts or connections with students	26
Exhibit 4: Difficulties to consider re: whether or not Western should attempt an accountability measure including departmental advising	31
Exhibit 5: Suggestions and insights concerning the possibility of measuring "departmental advising"	33

## **APPENDIX B:**

<b>Copies of Cover Letter and Survey of Departmental Advising Patterns and Recommendations for Change, Fall 1997</b>	<b>36</b>
Cover memo	37
Survey	38

## Executive Summary

Departmental/college advising is coming to occupy one of the several spotlights directed by feedback from students and by higher education accountability. For several years, alumni have been particularly critical of departmental advising. This year, advising has been put forward as one accountability measure and as one means to enhance performance on several others. To contextualize discussions of departmental advising and to provide a first round of input from departments, the chairs or advisors of thirty departments/colleges described their advising practices and gave their input regarding future directions for advising, during Fall, 1997.

Departments' advising practices are tremendously varied. The variety is especially underlined by the diverse comments--recorded verbatim in Appendix A: Exhibits 1 through 5--which show that departments not only have different ways of doing advising, but have fundamentally different definitions of advising. The number of students who need to be served, the types of advising needs students have, who does the advising, whether or not formal plans of study are developed, and the number of advising contacts made by departmental advisors all vary widely. More specifically:

- In most cases, students arrive at a department having decided on the major, but over one-fourth of departments say half or more of their students need advising on whether or not to enter their major.
- While two-thirds of departments accept all or most applicants for the major, advisors in the other third need to deal with a selection process that refuses at least five percent of applicants.
- Half of departments develop a written plan of study with all or most students at the time of major declaration. The other half do so with few or none of their students.
- While the most common report is that students make about one advising contact per quarter during their junior and senior years in the major, some departments report only one per year while others report six or more per year.
- Just under one-third of departments have staff do most pre-major advising and some later advising. Also just under one-third have the department chair do advising or have the chair and faculty split advising about half and half. A bit over one-third have faculty do all or most advising.
- Students are more satisfied with advising in departments where staff do more of the advising.

Departmental advisors and also a number of other advisors offered insights as to how faculty are involved in advising, whether and how to involve them more, and whether or not departmental advising could be included in the university's accountability measures. These comments and suggestions are included verbatim in the report. One model of advising for larger departments emerges from these comments: 1) A staff advisor does early advising--including pre-major and declaration of the major--and perhaps the senior evaluation as well; 2) Faculty provide "specialized" advising, requiring knowledge specific to the field-- including career planning and preparation for graduate school.

When asked about faculty mentoring models, opinion varied widely, with 12 of 30 departments favoring faculty involvement in freshman interest groups, four favoring mentoring as service, seven rejecting both approaches, and seven neutral or undecided. When asked whether departmental advising should be included in Western's accountability measures, most departments said it is possible and even desirable, but that doing so would be complex and risks interfering with the quality of the effort by inserting a bureaucratic nuisance factor. One possible approach may be to establish a set of critical advising stages and record whether each Western student receives advising at each stage.

## **Introduction**

Departmental/college advising is coming to occupy one of the several spotlights directed by feedback from students and by higher education accountability. For several years, alumni have been particularly critical of departmental advising. In Western's most recent alumni survey, for example, students were asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of their major departments. Fully 80.7% said they were "very" or "mostly" satisfied with the quality of instruction in their majors, but only 52.1% were similarly satisfied with "departmental/faculty advising concerning courses" and only 32.9% with "departmental/ faculty advising concerning careers."

This year, advising has been put forward as one accountability measure and as one means to enhance performance on several others. To contextualize discussions of departmental advising and to provide a first round of input from departments, the chairs or advisors of thirty departments/colleges were kind enough to complete an in-house survey during Fall, 1997.<sup>1</sup> They described selected aspects of their advising practices and offered thoughtful observations about departmental advising and whether or not certain aspects could be integrated into accountability measures. In addition, a brief supplemental survey asking for insights or suggestions about departmental advising was completed by 19 of the faculty and staff who engage in advising but were not responding on behalf of the department.

The primary goal of collecting this information is to provide ideas to stimulate and guide a subcommittee of the Provost's Accountability Work Group, as it considers ways departmental advising might be measured and might be enhanced so as to improve Western's performance on accountability measures. In addition, the descriptions of how advising is structured may be of interest to departmental planning. We are therefore publishing this report for public dissemination.

This report presents some quantitative findings describing qualities of advising reported by departments. However, statistical analysis is not particularly relevant here. The reports are descriptive, showing how advising is structured by nearly all of Western's departments. There is no attempt to generalize to any larger universe.

## **Advising Patterns**

Department chairs or advisors were asked who does most of their advising of several types, as well as other selected questions about advising (see Appendix **B** for the survey form). Responses are displayed in this section. Since we are dealing with only thirty departments, responses are posed in terms of number of departments rather than as percentages.

### **Need for advising**

More than any other factor, the number of students declaring each major has the greatest impact on advising work load. Of course, resources are greater as always in the larger departments. Table 1 shows the distribution of current number of majors among the thirty departments responding to the survey, as reported by each department. Since nearly all departments are represented here, these figures are a close approximation of the university distribution. One very large department, two medium sized departments and one small department did not respond to this section of the survey.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fairhaven College is included among these thirty units. We hope Fairhaven will forgive us for using the short hand "department" to refer to academic departments and also to colleges that are not divided into departments.

**Table 1. Distribution of current number of majors among the thirty departments who responded to the survey (n=30)**

<b>Number of Majors</b>	<b>Number of Departments</b>
Fewer than 100	5
100 - 150	5
151 - 200	7
201 - 300	5
301 - 400	4
401+	4

Another factor that influences the advising work load in a department is whether or not students have decided on a major before they seek advising from the department. The majority of departments (23 of 30) say that most or all of their students come to them having "pretty well decided" on that major rather than "need[ing] advising and information before deciding." (See Table 2)

Departmental advising workload is also influenced by the number of students who attempt to enter the major but do not meet qualifications. Not all departments are forced to limit entry, but the majority refuse at least some student applicants. Table 3 displays the distribution of additional advising work from this source at present.

**Table 2. Number of departments who say students come to them having decided on the major, and number who say students need advising before deciding (n=30)**

<b>Students' Status</b>	<b>Number of Departments</b>
Almost all decided	9
Most decided	14
Half and half	3
Most need advising	1
Almost all need advising	3

**Table 3. Proportion of students accepted as majors among departments who responded to the survey (n=29)**

<b>Acceptance of Majors</b>	<b>Number of Departments</b>
<b>All accepted</b>	<b>11</b>
A few refused	8
5 - 20% refused	9
Over 20% refused	1

## Advising Intensity

It is extremely difficult to estimate the number of times students receive advising from some member of a department or the intensity of those advising encounters. Too much departmental advising occurs informally, between students and faculty who may not even be named as advisors. Even so, we asked departments to estimate some surface indicators of advising intensity, to help set the groundwork for extended conversation.

Typically, the first juncture of serious advising for majors occurs at the time of major declaration. At that time, departments may discuss the major, choice of courses, etc. and may also work with the student to develop a written plan of study. Tables 4 and 5 report the extent to which departments undertake these two activities with majors "at the time of declaring."

**Table 4. Proportion of majors who talk with an advisor at the time of declaring a major (n=30)**

<b>Students Who Talk With Advisor When Declaring</b>	<b>Number of Departments</b>
All	20
Most	8
Half	0
Some	2

**Table 5. Proportion of majors who develop a written plan of study at the time of declaring a major (n=29)**

<b>Students Who Develop a Plan</b>	<b>Number of Departments</b>
All	13
Most	2
Half	0
Some	3
Few or none	11

We get confirmation of the general picture presented by Table 5 from a survey asking students whether they had ever completed a plan of study. We surveyed 652 advanced juniors and seniors enrolled during Winter quarter, 1995. Among the 96% who were pursuing a major, the percent who said they had ever developed a written plan of study was just over half--55.3%. Allowing for some confusion or memory loss, this figure is entirely consistent with Table 5. We also determined that the correlation between these reports by departments (Table 5) and the average percent of students in each department who say they had completed a plan of study is high--.64.

Another look at advising intensity involves departments' estimates of the total number of "advising contacts" they make on average per year during the junior and senior years. We asked for these estimates concerning "academic advising after major declaration (concerning course selection, special opportunities such as internships, curricular specializations, etc., but not concerning careers or larger life planning issues)" (see Table 6) and concerning "life planning and career or graduate school advising" (see Table 7).

The average number of advising contacts reported per year in the junior or senior years is 3.3 for academic advising after major declaration and 2.3 for life/career planning. For academic advising this figure of approximately one contact per quarter makes a great deal of intuitive sense, and it is not surprising that 11 of the 25 departments who responded to this question reported three contacts per year. On the other hand, the range varies from one annual contact (in two departments) to six (in four departments). Figures for life/career advising are lower and even more widely varied, spreading from zero to six, with the modal report at two.

An important element of the picture here is the wide variation in the frequency of advising, consistent with the great variation in the development of plans of study. It is not, however, the case that some departments score high and some low on all these indicators. The estimated number of contacts for academic and for life planning advising is quite consistent across units ( $r=.66$ ), but the tendency to develop written plans of study correlates so little with frequency of contact that with  $N=30$ , the correlation might easily have occurred by chance. For some, all these activities may be part of doing the advising job, but for others, plans of study may reduce the need for frequent advising contacts.

It is best to conclude therefore, that we are seeing marked variation in frequency of advising contacts, in whether or not plans of study are developed, and in whether a department emphasizes either, both, or neither of these advising tools (frequent contacts or plans of study).

**Table 6. Average number of academic advising contacts in junior or senior year (after major declaration), among departments who responded to the survey (n=28)**

Ave. Num. Academic Advising Contacts in Junior/Senior Year	Number of Departments
0	0
1	2
2	5
3	11
4	1
5	2
6	4
No way to estimate	3

**Table 7. Average number of advising contacts in junior or senior year (after major declaration) regarding life/career/graduate school, among departments who responded to the survey (n=28)**

Ave. Num. Advising Contacts in Jr./Sr. Yr. re: life/career/grad.sch.	Number of Departments
0	2
1	6
2	7
3	4
4	1
5	0
6+	3
No way to estimate	5

### Who Does Departmental Advising?

We asked departments whether "all, most, half, some or none" of their advising in four categories is done by the department chair, one or more staff advisors, one or more faculty advisors, or others such as student peer advisors. Only two departments said that "some" advising was done by students or others; we will therefore set aside that response. The types of advising we asked about are:<sup>2</sup>

- Pre-major advising (including transfer advising)
- Academic advising after major declaration
- Life planning and career or graduate school advising

For the most part, it is only in small departments where chairs do more than "some" advising, although they do at least some in the great majority of departments. Remarkably, in two departments with majors numbering in the 175-200 range, chairs do all or most of the after-declaration advising. In three medium sized departments they do all or most of the pre-major advising.

In larger departments, the bulk of advising is shared between faculty and staff, with faculty most often carrying the load. Tables 8, 9 and 10 display a typology that categorizes departments according to the mix of advisors for each of the three types of advising we asked about. Some departments assign all or most advising to staff or all to faculty, but more have a mix, as shown in these tables. In addition, some departments essentially report limited advising levels by reporting that staff, faculty, and/or chairs do "some" advising, but no one does more than that. We categorized these separately, under the heading "shared, but little formal advising."

<sup>2</sup> We also attempted to ask about advising at the time of major declaration, but a serious editing error invalidated that question.

**Table 8. Proportion of staff, faculty and chairs who provide pre-major advising among departments who responded to the survey (n=30)**

Source of Pre-Major Advising	Number of Departments
All staff	7
Faculty and staff equally	2
Faulty mostly, some staff & chair	6
All faculty	4
Mostly chair	4
Faulty and chair & pally	5
Little advising	2

**Table 9. Proportion of staff, faculty and chairs who provide academic advising after declaration of the major among departments who responded to the survey (n=29)**

Source of Academic Advising	Number of Departments
All staff	4
Faculty and staff equally	1
Faculty mostly, some staff & chair	6
All faculty	9
Mostly chair	4
Faculty and chair egially	3
Little advising	2

**Table 10. Proportion of staff, faculty and chairs who provide advising re: life/careers/.graduate schools among departments who responded to the survey (n=26)**

Source of Advising re: Life/careers/graduate schools	Number of Departments
All staff	1
Faulty and staff equally	1
Faculty mostly, some staff & chair	4
All faulty	7
Mostly chair	3
Faulty and chair equally	4
Little advising	6

The most powerful finding in each of these three tables is the wide variation in departmental advising patterns. There is no dominant structure, and even the seven types described in tables 8-10 underplay the true variation among departments. The major trend across Tables 8-10 is altogether logical: more advising is done by staff for pre-major than for major advising, and more for major advising than for life/career advising. This pattern--staff advising where university policies, paperwork, etc. are involved, followed by faculty advising when student questions involve the major field and life futures--is worthy of note. Despite the fact that it characterizes fewer than one-third of departments, it offers one particularly logical way of dividing the work load. A second trend is that about one-third of departments apparently do little by way of formal advising concerning life and careers. Five departments felt unable to respond to that question, and another six indicated relatively little advising of that type.

The faculty role in advising is greatest for advising concerning the major and completing the major, with 15 of 29 departments saying all or the majority of advising is done by faculty and another four saying faculty share equally with either a staff person or the chair. Life and career advising differs from the others primarily in that more departments do only a little such advising and that staff are much less likely to be involved than faculty or chair.

Leaving aside for the moment the issue of life/career advising because eleven departments skipped that question or reported relatively little such advising, we can characterize departments according to their stability or change between pre-major and major advising. Most remain stable, but some changes are evident. Staff and chair roles in advising decline, while the faculty role increases. In fourteen departments, staff have no role in advising at either juncture. Of the other sixteen, the staff role is stable in nine and declining in seven. The chair role is stable in sixteen cases (three of no role, eleven of "some" and two higher), increasing in three cases and decreasing in six. The faculty role is stable in sixteen cases (three with no involvement), increased in eleven departments and decreased in three. The model of moving from staff to faculty advising is most common in the largest departments.

### **Student Reports of Advising Experiences in Relation to Departmental Reports**

Because we surveyed a group of advanced juniors and seniors in Winter 1995, we have reasonably proximate data to compare student perceptions of their advising experiences with departmental reports concerning how advising is conducted. To do with, we aggregated average student reports by department for the three measures relevant to departmental advising. The original question for each measure is presented below, along with a short name (in bold) to be used in discussion.

- **Plan of study.** "Have you ever worked with a member of your major department to formulate a plan of study for your major?"
- **Understanding.** "Would you say the requirements and sequences necessary to complete your major are. ..very clear and easy to understand, mostly clear, somewhat unclear, or very unclear?"
- **Satisfaction.** "**How** satisfying have you found your advising in the major to be? Would you say... very, mostly, somewhat, or not at all satisfying?"

While the sample is modest, it was well structured for this type of analysis because we stratified by size of major, to ensure relatively more equal numbers of respondents in each major than would be the case had we simply sampled all Western students. We calculated departmental means for those 25 majors where we had at least 10 respondents. These numbers are small enough to introduce considerable random error, which undermines the possibility of

finding reliable patterns. Even so, some patterns do emerge, allowing for some intriguing speculation about advising effectiveness. In particular:

- Consistently, for any type of advising, the more staff involvement in the advising, the higher students' satisfaction and understanding of the major. Similarly, the greater the role played by chairs and by faculty, the lower the satisfaction and understanding. These associations are too weak to be statistically reliable in the case of life/career advising, are reliable for both satisfaction and understanding in the case of post-declaration major advising, and are reliable for satisfaction in the case of pre-major advising.<sup>3</sup>
- Reducing staff involvement from pre-major to post-declaration advising is associated reliably with lower reports of understanding and is weakly associated with lower satisfaction.
- Satisfaction with advising is reliably higher when the student remembers having completed a plan of study, but the association with departmental reports of average tendencies to do plans of study does not hold up.
- It appears initially that departments with more formally designated advising offices produce greater student satisfaction and understanding. However, further analysis shows that relationship to be spurious. In fact, departments tend to have offices when staff do advising, and staff advisors produce greater satisfaction and understanding. The fact of the office in itself appears to have no additional impact.
- Very little that we measured affects the proportion of students in a major who say they did a plan of study. The departmental policy of doing them has a huge effect, and having an advising office is also closely associated, but no other factors are reliably associated.
- One very important finding emerges as a caution to attempts to measure departmental advising. For both major advising and life/career advising, although not for pre-major advising, it is reliably the case that the more readily the department reports that it could "... log/record your ... advising contacts," the lower the satisfaction and understanding of majors in that department. It appears that ease of recording is acting as an indicator of relatively routine advising that is less satisfying than more complex advising. Indeed, this is the only other factor that proves as powerful as the involvement of staff in advising as a predictor of satisfaction and understanding.

In summary, even with this limited database, we encounter a consistent and substantial finding that student satisfaction with their departmental advising and also their reported understanding of their major requirements and sequences are higher in cases where staff involvement in advising is greater. The next question should be what it is about the ways staff advise, their availability, etc. that creates this greater satisfaction. It appears that part of the answer may be the formal designation of an advising office, but that is less important than the fact of staff advising. At the same time, we also have indirect evidence that one possible explanation--that staff may routinize advising, making it reasonably easy to record--is not correct. Student satisfaction is higher in cases where advisors say measuring advising would be more difficult. Also, staff and faculty advisors respond equally on the question of ease of recording advising contacts.

### **Comments on How to Improve Advising**

Here we turn to verbatim comments as to various ways that departmental advising can be improved. Because many Chairs and Advisors took a lot of time to respond to the survey's open-ended questions in this regard, we have attempted to synthesize comments and suggestions into lists, presented as exhibits in Appendix A. Of course, the comments

---

<sup>3</sup> Associations are reported as statistically reliable if the probability of error is less than .05.

speaking for themselves, however we offer brief observations as particular themes have emerged, and strong concerns have been raised.

### **Should faculty be more involved in departmental advising?**

Since a great deal of interest has been expressed in developing ways to get faculty more involved in departmental advising, we asked Chairs/Advisors to share ideas as to how faculty are currently involved in departmental advising, ways to get faculty more involved, and whether different types or stages of advising should be handled by faculty and/or by staff (See Appendix A: Exhibit 1). Fourteen of the 31 Chairs/Advisors who responded say that faculty are already extensively involved. Six of these 14 respondents say, in fact, that they consider advising an "internal" part of teaching. One department trains faculty to expect they will do advising extensively--"it is part of the department expectation." An additional four respondents favor significant faculty involvement, although the current level of involvement is unclear. On the other end of the spectrum, two respondents suggest that in order to get faculty more involved, "the state needs to recognize advising as a faculty function", or at least "the university needs to reward or even recognize the time and energy required to be a good effective advisor." These sentiments are also reflected by four of the respondents to the Advisor Supplement. They suggest that faculty be given credit for advising--"like release time"--, or be given recognition in some other way, as in "merit and T and P reviews".

Nine of the 31 Department Chairs/Advisors, and 5 of the 18 respondents to the Advisor Supplement, favor involvement of both staff and faculty in advising. Generally, these respondents recommend a two-stage advising process, with staff handling technical/administrative issues ("academic advising" handled by a central advisor), and faculty handling issues specific to their field ("career/professional advising" in specific areas of interest). With this two-stage recommendation, certain basic issues are addressed--clearly enough that we develop this model a bit more fully here as a stimulus for discussion. Needless to say, both stages of advising could be handled by faculty. The key to this approach is the division of advising functions into more technical and organizational issues such as major declaration and senior evaluations, versus less routinizable issues such as the relationship between various courses and longer term careers.

Drawing on comments and suggestions from various advisors, we suggest the following components of a staff-to-faculty advising structure.

- Advising is defined specifically in terms of "academic" vs. "life/career planning". Responsibilities re: staff and faculty are clearly defined, and both are essential to the whole advising process ("the complete advising package")
- Academic Advising: A central departmental advisor (staff) provides a focus for students--a central location, with easy accessibility--where academic and administrative matters are handled on a daily basis. This central advisor maintains current knowledge regarding university policies and procedures, and provides consistent direction re: departmental programs, degree options, graduation requirements, and class scheduling. This advisor oversees mandatory sign-offs on declarations, plans of study, and major evaluations for graduation, and is responsible for departmental record-keeping and tracking.
- Life/Career planning: Faculty advising is a "specialized" role, regarding course content and issues specific to the field--an integrated component of the teaching-learning process. Faculty advise students regarding career possibilities, how to prepare for graduate school, where to look for positions, how to present themselves as professionals in their field, and the like. Such advisement can be accomplished during class time, office hours, by

appointment, departmental meetings/workshops, or one-credit seminars focusing on substantive areas. (See Appendix A: Exhibit 1 for further details)

### Is "faculty mentoring" a possibility?

One idea that has received some attention during accountability discussions of ways to enhance the student experience at Western might be called "faculty mentoring" of new students. Chairs and/or advisors were asked to comment on the advisability of two main models which have emerged so far:

- **Model I.** Faculty mentoring as service. Faculty would volunteer to have a small number of new students assigned as their advisees.
- **Model II.** One-credit seminars or "interest groups", modeled along the lines offered at the University of Washington. The smaller course would afford an opportunity for students to have informal advisement opportunities with the professor).

Twelve of the 30 departments who responded favor Model II, while 7 of the 30 respondents remain neutral (primarily feeling lukewarm or having no opinion) (Table 11).

**Table 11: Do departments favor or reject the possibility of two "faculty mentoring" models? (n=30)**

Favor or reject "faculty mentoring" models?	Number of Departments
Favor Model One-credit seminars/Interest groups"	12
Favor Model 1: Faculty mentoring as service	4
Neutral or N/A	7
Reject both models	7

Verbatim comments are listed in Appendix A: Exhibit 2. Generally, the sentiment is that Model II has the possibility of working--however, *only* if it were built into the teaching load, not as overload. "Faculty are already very busy and have limited time in their schedules for advising. If it was an actual class that they got credit for teaching and students got credit for taking, then neither would feel like they were wasting their time." Also, two departments who feel neutral at this point, suggest a small pilot project initially. These opinions are echoed by respondents to the Advisor Supplement, with the added insight offered by one advisor: "The interest group idea is worth trying. Advising will work when: 1) it is an expected aspect of a faculty member's role, 2) when we consider it in the hiring process--when we seek faculty who value advising, and 3) when we acknowledge and reward faculty for their advising efforts."

On the student end of things, Model II is favored for a number of reasons: helping students early in the college process (including choice of major); binding them to the department socially as well as academically (more grounding and broader base for information gathering); and enhancing retention overall.

Seven of the Chair and/or Advisor respondents (and 4 of Advisors) reject both models altogether. Again, the sentiment is that faculty are already overburdened. One respondent points out that mentoring has already been tried, and it failed "because it is too artificial an exercise." Another states that "this sounds like overkill. I sense that WWU already goes out of its way to accommodate new and prospective students (all the summer and early fall activities).

I oppose course credit for advising. This has the effect of eroding the academic nature of courses. This is already a problem."

On the other end of the spectrum, three respondents to the Advisor Supplement indicate that they like both models. One comments as follows: "Both suggestions are good. We have a beginning in that direction with the Liberal Arts Options program which offers colloquia, course clusters, and special GUR sections--all for Freshmen and all with the general expectation that advising of a generic sort might develop. The Liberal Arts Options Committee has expressed interest in exploring the FIGS model--it is similar to what we already do with the course clusters. Perhaps making advising an explicit part of these experiences and giving a fresh impetus to the Options program generally would be a way of acting on these models." (See Appendix A: Exhibit 2 for further comments)

### **Other suggestions as to how to improve advising**

As to the question of how to improve advising in general, and how to create greater contacts or connections with students, we have prepared a table which lists verbatim the specific suggestions offered by Department Chairs/Advisors (Appendix A: Exhibit 3). Listed in order of most common to least:

- Built-in stages and/or check-points requiring advising (8 of 26 Chairs/Advisors);
- Accessible, quality advisors—well trained, equipped to handle the full range of advisement services, friendly (5 of 26 Chairs/Advisors)
- Printed materials, workshops, career fairs, critical courses (5 of 26);
- Departmental meetings, clubs, social events (3 of 26);
- Pro-active opportunities, signature control (2)

Recognizing the point that "more is not necessarily better", this list illustrates the overall recommendation--to create a *system* of departmental advising that includes an *array of strategies*, as well as stages or phases of advising, "to increase overall access and effectiveness".

We have already discussed the idea of two-stage advising, wherein both staff and faculty are involved in two distinctly different aspects of advising-- "academic" and "life/career/graduate school". "Check-points" consist of mandatory points of advisement for all students--easy to document (in terms of departmental records as well as measures for accountability)--including applications for declaration, plans of study, mid-program checkpoints, senior evaluations for graduation. The issue of "quality advisors" of course reiterates the overall issue of "effectiveness" and how to measure "quality". For an "array of strategies", see Exhibit 3 for detailed lists.

### **Can We Measure Departmental Advising?**

For each of three phases of advising--pre-major advising, academic major advising, and career/life advising--we asked department chairs or advisors to estimate how difficult it would be to "log/record advising contacts" for that particular type of advising. Responses are displayed in Table 12.

Two patterns are apparent in Table 12. First, very few departments see such recording as easily managed or as impossible. Second, the number of departments who say recording advising would be "some nuisance but OK" declines from fifteen to eight, as we move from pre-major advising to career/life planning advising, while the number who say it would be

"possible, but a serious bother" rises from seven to fourteen. Type of advising clearly matters, as is logical.

Surprisingly, responses to these questions do not differ depending on the number of majors enrolled in each department, except that the few who said it would be "no problem at all" were all small majors. Of course, we have no measure of the relative balance of advising needs and advising resources, which ideally would not depend on the size of the major. Nor did responses differ with relative staff vs. faculty or chair involvement in advising. Further conversation will be needed to determine how difficult departmental advisors think it would be to record advising contacts.

**Table 12. How difficult would it be for departments to log/record advising contacts for each of the following three phases of advising?**

<b>Type of Advising</b>	<b>Number of Departments</b>			
	<b>Easy</b>	<b>Possible Nuisance But Okay</b>	<b>Possible But Serious of the Bother</b>	<b>Out of the Question</b>
PreMajor Advising (n=30)	6	15	7	2
Advising after declaration (n=30)	5	13	10	2
Life/career advising (n=29)	4	8	14	3

### **Should We Measure Departmental Advising?**

Department chairs and/or advisors were asked to offer any insights concerning whether or not they believe Western should attempt a measure including departmental advising, and what we can, cannot, should, and/or should not include in a revised measure of advising. In general, the majority of department chairs and/or advisors favor attempting to revise the accountability measure to include "departmental advising"--all with some degree of caveats, however, that a number of issues must first be dealt with. (See Table 13)

One respondent clearly summarizes the overall situation:

There is tremendous disparity in views and practices among the various academic units (departments and colleges). There is no shared vision of the role advising plays in student life and learning. There is no agreement as to how advising should be considered with regard to faculty responsibilities and loads. There is little agreement, even, as to who should be doing academic advising--faculty or staff. So, what are we going to measure? What criterion should be used? There are fundamental questions/decisions that must be addressed before we can assess...

We have organized Department Chairs/Advisors' verbatim comments into two outlines: a) Difficulties to consider (Exhibit 4), and b) Suggestions and insights concerning the possibility of measuring "departmental advising" (Exhibit 5). Both lists address the following interrelated concerns:

- *What* constitutes advising (formal vs. informal and academic vs. life/career advising);
- *How* to measure-- in terms of quality, as well as quantity;
- *Who* is doing the advising (faculty, staff, or both in combination);
- *When* (through various checkpoints or stages of the advising process)
- *Why* is a specific aspect of advising to be measured, and is there is room for improvement in this area? In particular, one respondent raises the following point: "how does the state plan to use the figures?...we need to be aware that whatever figures we supply, we will be told we must improve on them, when in fact, there may not be much room for improvement."

**Table 13: Should Western attempt to revise its accountability measure of advising to include "departmental advising"? (n=30)**

<b>Should Western revise its accountability measure to include departmental advising?</b>	<b>Number of Departments</b>
Yes—do some measurement already, or can do-- however, certain issues need to be dealt with	18
Yes, however serious difficulties need to be dealt with	6
Neutral/unclear/undecided "consider certain issues first"	3
No	2

An additional concern—related to *who* is doing the advising—is brought up by three respondents of the Advisor Supplement survey: "If faculty (or staff) are to be held accountable for advising students, they need to be trained in those skills." "Advisors must be adequately equipped to handle questions regarding majors/minors, courses, careers, etc." (See Appendix A: Exhibits 4 and 5 for detailed comments).

## **Summary and Discussion**

This report has described selected aspects of advising by departments, documenting an openness to measure advising for accountability, but also good reasons for concern that advising not be bureaucratized or standardized. Departments report such a diversity of needs and approaches as to defy "one-size-fits-all" solutions. On the other hand, departmental advising remains an area of relative dissatisfaction among Western's graduates.

One finding of particular interest here is that departments making the most extensive use of staff advisors have the highest student satisfaction ratings. This finding refers not to having a front office staff person answering questions, but rather to staff who are assigned as departmental advisors, especially for purposes of pre-major advising and other advising relevant more to the organization (e.g., graduation requirements and senior evaluations) than to specifics of the profession.

Regarding the measurement of advising, perhaps the suggestion that has greatest potential to improve students' experiences without swamping advisors in red tape is the model of identifying critical advising junctures and measuring our success at providing advising to

students at each juncture. Examples might be pre-major advising (in departments or elsewhere), a plan of study at declaration, a formal progress report and advisement session approximately one year later, the required senior evaluation, and advising regarding career and/or graduate schools. Different means might prove best to deliver each type of advising, and different means could be used by each department, yet measuring our success at providing each would presumably be manageable.

The greatest value of this report is that it makes available the *verbatim* comments of thirty chairs and departmental advisors, attached as Appendix A: Exhibits 1 through 5. All commentary is reported verbatim, because the comments we received are so varied, so complex, and so non-comparable as to defy summary. This in itself says something very fundamental about the nature of departmental advising at Western. Thus we encourage readers to pay particular attention to the attached exhibits. It is our hope that both the accountability effort, and also the efforts of each department to serve its students at the highest quality level possible, will benefit from the perspectives shared by this group of chairs and departmental advisors.

## **Appendix A: Verbatim Comments**

**Exhibit 1: Comments as to how faculty are currently involved in departmental advising, ways to get faculty more involved, and ways that departments favor involvement of both staff and faculty in advising**

**Exhibit 2: Comments regarding the possibility of two "faculty mentoring" models: Model I) Faculty mentoring as service, and Model II) One-credit seminars/"interest groups"**

**Exhibit 3: Suggestions as to how to improve advising in general, and to create greater contacts or connections with students**

**Exhibit 4: Difficulties to consider re: whether or not Western should attempt an accountability measure including departmental advising**

**Exhibit 5: Suggestions and insights concerning the possibility of measuring "departmental advising"**

**Exhibit 1: Should faculty be more involved in departmental advising?  
Comments as to how faculty are currently involved in  
departmental advising, ways to get faculty more involved, and  
ways that departments favor involvement of both staff and  
faculty in advising (Department Chairs and/or Advisors, n=31)**

---

---

◇ **Current levels of faculty involvement in departmental advising**

- **Departments favoring significant faculty involvement  
(already involve faculty extensively) 14**
  - We already do a significant amount of advising by faculty (2 responses)
  - We have seventeen faculty in department. We divide declared majors among faculty (including the "pre-majors" designation). Each professor has 15-30 advisees, depending on program. We cannot get more involved; we are already at 100%.
  - For our major to work, students must be guided through it if only to be informed about availability of necessary courses. Doing so is part of the common task of faculty involved with the major. (Volume of students is not much of a problem.)
  - We engage in considerable student advising but what we do is partly a function of our small size and is therefore difficult to generalize. For example, advising occurs in the very informal settings out and at department club meetings held at a local pizzeria.
  - Of course the faculty are involved in advising. We consider it an internal part of teaching. Is this novel?
  - We require that all students see their advisor once when they declare their major. Some do not need to see their advisor again. Others need a lot more hand holding. It is (and should be) up to the student to come in if they need advice.
  - In our department, all faculty do major and minor advising. Since our major is small (60 credits) and relatively uncomplicated, it does not take a great deal of time to educate faculty about the requirements for the major and minor. We have published a guide to advising for faculty, and it seems to answer most of the questions that arise. The department believes that advising should be handled by faculty, and while it is willing to let staff handle some of the most basic issues in advising e.g. where does a particular course fit in the GURS (it satisfies a humanities requirement), most faculty believe they should handle advisement.
  - Almost all our faculty advise extensively. We train them to expect it—part of department expectation—so it is.
  - Advising should be handled by faculty not staff. This is a very important component of our job as a faculty member. In our department, every student has a faculty advisor that they meet with regularly. Advisors work closely with students in both curriculum and career planning.
  - We assign each major to an advisor who has the responsibility to contact each of his/her advisees to discuss their progress.

- All of our full-time faculty are involved in student advising. Because we offer several different major options students are frequently assigned a faculty advisor based on the major option they select. For our standard major the number of advisees is balanced by faculty however, every effort is made to give students the faculty advisor of their choice. Students are also encouraged to meet with the department chair and any other faculty in the department as the need arises.
  - Our department is doing very well. Advising falls into two types: mechanical sign-up and out as well as academic and life issues--this is best done by faculty.
  - My impression is that students are advised very well regarding options like the intern program opportunities, and sharing research in our annual student conference where students meet with a faculty member on a proposal and deliver a paper. Students interested in graduate programs are steered around the department and see two or three faculty. Transfer students all meet with a faculty transfer advisor. As long as the faculty continue to respond to students in a humane way, as is the culture of the department, students are served well. The informal contact is extensive. We also have students working on research with faculty.
- **Departments favoring significant faculty involvement (level of involvement unclear) 4**
- Faculty should be involved in advising in helping students be more knowledgeable about possible career plans, where to look for positions, how to present themselves as professionals in their field. Where to look for internships and job related experience. What classes within the discipline would be of most use to the student based on the direction they wish to take within the discipline. Faculty are very interested in students doing well in school and afterwards however, do not have time to be bogged down with students who need an excessive amount of hand holding.
  - One means we have used is to arrange an advising session during fall quarter. We introduce the faculty and distribute a roster. Students are encouraged to contact professors (whose names and faces are now familiar).
  - I believe that primarily faculty not staff should be advising students. I think students should be assigned an advisor before they declare a major. Many of them have some idea what they want to major in and I think they should be assigned an advisor in that area.
  - I strongly believe in faculty advising, but in very large departments this may be a burden. I have no respect for students advising students. Too inconsistent
- ◇ **Comments as to developing ways to get faculty more involved in advising 4**
- I do not have an answer to this problem. Force each faculty to do a % of students based on faculty/major ratio?
  - We will be creating a more systematic advising system this year, one that assigns students to a single advisor who will stay with the student from the time of declaration to graduation. We think such a practice will build stronger bonds between students and faculty and enhance the students' experience in the department.

- It is a good idea to develop ways to recognize faculty advisement as an activity that is expected, rewarded. Today there is no evidence that the university values the faculty advisor or intend to reward or even recognize (Outstanding Advisor Award) the time and energy required to be a good effective advisor. Basically, it (advising) comes out of hide and cuts into time for scholarship or class preparation or teaching (nonclassroom) activities. Committee work does not suffer because the meetings are scheduled around or on top of advisement appointments. I've been advising for twenty years and have been rewarded with numerous thank you cards, smiles of appreciation, and an occasional coffee mug. Nice, but it would have been equally nice to know that the students weren't the only ones appreciative of my efforts.
- The fundamental structural problem is that the state does not recognize advising as a faculty function. Need to get state policy changed on advising.

◇

0

### **Departments favoring involvement of both staff and faculty**

9

- Since we have few majors this is not a big issue for us (e.g. involving faculty more). We disseminate information for internships and other opportunities through posting notices, and advanced classes are sufficiently small that faculty develop personal contacts with students resulting in much more informal advising. We also run a student club, to which we invite career professionals who provide further guidance. The bulk routine advising for students taking service courses in my department is so standard that staff can readily handle it.
- Faculty advisement is essential--we admit students to majors and they are assigned a faculty advisor upon admission--we have (though not at the moment) required students to meet with faculty to develop a plan of study, which is signed off by the faculty with a copy for the student and for the advisor. We require a graduation evaluation prior to the Registrar's senior evaluation, and that must be signed by the faculty member, again on the plan of study form--a staff member is assigned to review the students program to make sure all program requirements have been met (since faculty are not infallible).
- This department is currently revamping its advising program and expects to have its new system operational by Spring '98. All full-time faculty will participate in advising, as they once did in the late '70s and early '80s. Staff will still be involved, but in a support capacity. The secretary will route inquiries for departmental advisement to the appropriate faculty specialty advisors and the administrative assistant--who currently handles the majority of department advising activities--will focus on dissemination of advising information to faculty, tracking the advising/ mentoring process, providing department tours for recruitment visits and organizing central advising services, such as career related workshops and our priority registration program for majors. Each faculty member will have a group of declared majors assigned to him by the department chair and will be those students' primary advisor for all aspects of their program until graduation. Several of the faculty will also serve in specialized advising roles: general department advisor (for students who are investigating the possibility of declaring a department major), transfer advisors, pre-med advisors (for those declared department majors that are also pre-med), education advisor, graduate program advisor. The greatest challenge is for faculty to provide a complete advising package, not just a focus on career advising. It requires a commitment to staying abreast of options available to our students--in campus services and selection of GURS and/or minors, in program options within the department, in career information.

- I think that academic advising--the administrative/technical, nuts-and-bolts aspects of advising--should be done through a central (or core) departmental advisor. Whether staff or faculty, this must be someone who can advise students thoroughly, and assist them through every step of the process, as to the full range of policies, procedures, and requirements concerning a) declaration of the major, b) developing a plan of study for the major, c) class scheduling and registration issues, d) general university requirements for graduation (the bigger picture for each student), and e) procedures for senior evaluation/application for graduation.. .With a central person who is formally responsible for handling these technical/administrative matters, it is possible to disseminate information consistently and to maintain record-keeping accurately--a necessary component to providing accurate measures for accountability.

For advising concerning a specific "area of interest" within the field, career/life planning, and graduate school preparation, I believe faculty should be more involved. Indeed, this particular aspect of advising--about the major field itself--should be considered an important and inherent part of performing in the professor role. It can be accomplished in the classroom group-setting, as well as during regular office hours for more quality time. At present this kind of advising is informal and inconsistent, and record-keeping is not maintained as to the number of contacts of this sort. I doubt that faculty would welcome "formalizing" this kind of advising, and if we did, only a few would be willing to participate. Even so, those few are already over-burdened, and I imagine they would have difficulty keeping records of such advising contacts. If a system like this were to be set up, an idea would be this: have faculty turn in quarterly reports to the central advisor, who would then be in charge of compiling numbers.

- Faculty are very busy with "teaching"! One of the issues behind "more faculty" involvement--is to keep from expending \$\$ on hiring "competent" advisors. There are many well trained advising staff out there--who have credentials and appropriate skills to do a very good job. But if the faculty take on the task--then we save \$\$ and overwork the faculty.

A thought. Faculty by their very nature are not good advisors. Faculty are research oriented individuals--who prefer research and teaching to one on one advising. Only 25% of faculty are outgoing "people" type individuals. Thus look at any department and you will find 25% of the faculty do "most" of the advising that is done or done well. Students are attracted to these individuals for their "people" skills--listening ability and friendly attitude.

A simple, but effective advising model:

Student sees a designated staff advisor

Talks about major--entering the college (department)

Questions about University

Questions about the college or department, faculty, classes etc.

Layout in writing course of study, plans, specific questions to the concentration

Student is "referred" by the advisor to the "appropriate" faculty.

A memo can be sent to the faculty member as introduction and clearance for the student

Student now approaches the faculty member with a focus and questions pertaining to the faculty's specific area of interest. In this model the staff advisor fields the questions and helps the student focus. It is less threatening for the student to see an

advisor before seeing a "faculty" member. Also when the student does arrive at the faculty member's door, the student has a focus-- can ask questions pertaining to an area of interest and much less time is wasted in the entire process. The faculty are much happier because they deal with "specific" issues. The students are much happier--now having two people to identify with for different kinds of concerns and issues.

This would also be a good model for tracking. The advisor keeps track of the "initial" contact and sets up a file. The advisor sends information to the individual faculty member concerning the students "referred". The faculty member can then more easily keep a tally of the students that are advised--having already received some form of information from the advisor. (This works great if the advisor sets up a file for each student for the faculty member--containing a current transcript and a bit of information about the student--transfer, list of courses to be taken, etc.). The faculty member could feedback information to the advisor--say a weekly tally--then the Advisor is responsible to gather this information and enter it into some sort of "number crunching" database to be fed to the "larger" database.

An advisor does not need to be hired for every single department or program. Some programs could combine under one (professional) advisor to work with.

- The College's undergraduate academic advisor is the first initial contact for advising and academic information on majors at the College. This is a 75% permanent staff position who's job responsibility is academic advising. Once students are admitted as majors, they are assigned a faculty advisor. Students then work with the College's undergraduate academic advisor, their faculty advisor, Academic Advising Services, and the College's graduate advisor (if they are considering graduate school) as they progress through their course work to graduation. Faculty post office hours a minimum of 2 hours per week specifically for student advising. A means of improving faculty advising is to improve each faculty's knowledge of curriculum and degree options and requirements. Rotation of faculty on College's curriculum committee helps in this regard. Curriculum issues are also discussed at the College's curriculum centers' bi-monthly meetings both in terms of immediate changes and long range panning. A graduation requirement of the College is that students complete a senior thesis or project, an internship, or a study abroad. This is under faculty advisement and strengthens the interaction between students and faculty.
- Depending upon the curricular structure and the need for close monitoring of students, I recommend that a combination of faculty and staff advising be used. If faculty do not have to deal with the minute details of a student's progress through the curricular structure, they will have more time to act as true mentors to students. Also, having one person responsible for monitoring student progress aids in the consistent application of policies and procedures. For those departments where concise record-keeping is required for accreditation in professional organizations, a staff advisor acting as record-keeper is also a benefit.
- General advising should be left in the hands of the department staff as soon as they are knowledgeable about their program Staff are more accessible than faculty and have a broader overview as well as knowledge of how the whole university fits together. Staff also know when to refer a student to the chair or a specific faculty member. Staff also will give consistent direction to all students. Faculty should be involved in advising in helping students be more knowledgeable about possible

- career plans, where to look for positions, and how to present themselves as professionals in their field. Faculty are very interested in students doing well in school and afterwards, however do not have time to be bogged down with students who need an excessive amount of hand holding.
- Peer advising helps screen pre-majors who have interest, but are not truly committed. We are trying to let students know if they are unlikely to be admitted due to GPA or weak writing skills or interests beyond the courses we offer. We still see a lot of people who want to be a major, but won't get in and it is hard to explain why student demand does not seem to move resources. Most advising after declaration happens with full-time faculty; all full-time faculty eventually do advising, but the load is uneven.

**Exhibit 2: Comments regarding the possibility of two "faculty mentoring" models: Model I) Faculty mentoring as service, and Model II) One-credit seminars/Interest groups" (Department Chairs and/or Advisors, n=30)**

---

◇

**Favor Model II**

**12**

- I am skeptical of a class for credit but would be open to reviewing what has worked. There is a lot of sorting out that a student must do in the early college years and we could probably do a better job of helping them with the process.
- Idea number 1 is a bad one. I think it would be a waste of both faculty and student time. Idea number 2 is a good one, as long as the focus or the course remained substantive.
- 1. Not practical at WWU size. 2. Could do, need to build it into the load, not as overload.
- Great idea. Our dept. advising program is strong, but it requires that initial contact be made by the student. Our program is structured to serve declared majors, not those students who are still comparison shopping for a science major. I think model number 2 shows the most promise and would follow up on the initial groundwork laid down by the "summerstart" and "transitions" programs My experience is that fewer and fewer students read materials provided, be it the university catalogue or handouts at an orientation program. A conversation oriented interest group that would meet over the duration of the student's first quarter at WWU would probably be much more successful in orienting students to Western and its programs.
- I believe #1 would absolutely not work, as very inconsistent quality, and only a few faculty would take on this responsibility. Number 2 is a fine possibility.
- Suggestion Two has the best chance of working. Faculty are already very busy and have limited time in their schedules for advising. If it was an actual class that they got credit for teaching and students got credit for taking then neither would feel like they were wasting their time. Faculty have all they can manage to fit in their classes, prep time, grading, campus service commitments, office hours, community service commitments, and their own research. Students have all they can manage with classes, studying, and usually working. An informal session would allow students to learn to have conversations with faculty outside of the classroom and to learn to not be intimidated about asking for direction and advice.
- Need to be careful about adding to faculty workload. I favor the second option and feel it needs to be built into the teaching load.
- Two-preferred. SS advisors are already in place. The day of social gathering--esp. as it once was--is gone. Forget this--either faculty understand mentoring or are not. I do like the idea of faculty signature before registering. How about Pre-Registration Checking.

- This collection is impossible to oppose, but I think we need to go into such a project with our eyes open. Freshman Interest Groups have worked well at the UW, and even better at the University of Oregon, where they originated, because there is a significant advisement component to them, and because they are well thought out. Our counterpart to them has not worked nearly so well, in large part because they have not had the same kind or level of support that larger and better funded institutions are able to provide. If we decide to go ahead with the sorts of activities envisioned under this heading, we must do so with our eyes open and with a greater commitment to their success than we have so far manifested. My own sense is that the Provost's Office would need to reserve a considerable amount of money and provide administrative oversight to make an effort of this sort work well. If we are not willing to put in the time and energy to make it work well, we should not try it. The things noted here can not be done well if they do not receive a considerable assistance.
- Both ideas work, but number one is more demanding of faculty and does not readily attract their involvement. It is hard to administer and monitor. The second alternative is easier to setup, at least for majors. I favor this approach.
- The models are both good. The UW model is most appealing and very successful. It would be of value to study this process and see exactly how it works from beginning to end. Especially how the faculty are compensated. These would work very well for those faculty who are more open and outgoing people. From what I know of the model at the UW it is well worth investigating. Advisors could also be worked into this model. By having them visit the groups of the various professors in their departments. This would give the student even more grounding and a broader base for information gathering.
- I asked several of our College faculty to respond to this question. Their response to number 1) wasn't favorable, but they were very supportive of number 2). They suggested the meetings between the student and their faculty advisor be quarterly or at least twice a year to check on the students progress.

◇

### **Favor Model I**

**4**

- I have served as a mentor w/ multicultural services (where student participation is voluntary). I make initial contact (usually for lunch), then allow the student to follow up. About one out of three students so far have maintained contact and sought advice or interaction. It seems to me that mentoring should be offered, not required. Interesting idea. I wonder if it could work without creating more overload for an already over-stretched faculty (Number 2?)
- The mentoring idea has possibilities.
- The more connected to the field of study and their academic life, the more significant the contact. During our new student retreat, faculty spend a day with a small group of students on some kind of adventure (hike, museum visit, service learning project, etc.) Students often stay connected to that faculty member.

- This department has a process by which faculty are provided time and encouragement to mentor students in their applied studios and other classes... This department is unique in that it is necessary for all students to be properly advised on a quarterly basis from the beginning of their studies until graduation. Most of the students attending Summerstart are assigned advisers who represent departments or programs within the student's stated area of interest. These students are encouraged to seek council from their Summerstart adviser until they declare a major and are assigned to a departmental adviser. As far as the idea of an "interest group" is concerned, at 15 students per group, it would take 130 faculty to mentor this year's freshman class. This is hardly realistic given the proposal to "build it into" the teaching load, thus reducing the academic courses taught by those faculty who agree to participate in such a program.

◇

**Neutral or N/A**

7

- All my students are good students who are either already school administrators or experienced teachers preparing to be. Working full time. So question is N/A.
- Any idea is worth trying and the value of one or the other can only be determined by a pilot study. Again I believe that whatever is made available the students will take the opportunity.
- At this stage I have no suggestions. As we seek to manage the rapid increase in Spanish majors we shall be confronting issues and developing procedures that we have not been forced to deal with before.
- I feel lukewarm and would suggest a small pilot project initially.
- Western has had experience with both of these, in the present Freshman advising setup, and various "university 101" courses for Freshman. Participants in both should be interviewed for their evaluation, particularly of the ratio of investment to return.
- Does not seem necessary in small departments. We know our students quite well. No opinion on large departments.

I do not think we have a problem that needs correcting

**Reject both models**

7

- Let us not mentor! This term is used to bastardize a naturally forming relationship. I believe in advising not in "loco aprentis".
- Number 1 is out of the question, but could be suggested. Signatures for registration is a bad idea. Number 2 would use of the resources of faculty who already are overburdened. With 12 faculty and 180 majors every single faculty member would have to teach one of these classes. In some cases we do not necessarily want some faculty dealing in small groups with freshmen. A better idea is to have student mentors and give credit or pay them--that is seniors dealing with first year, or new majors in a standard way.

- Both are bad ideas unless faculty are compensated in some way. As it stands, advisors are already overworked, as is the rest of the faculty. Students always get to see me during my office hours (I have 6 per week) and often at other times as well.
  - Sounds like more work and more time taken from an already impossibly busy schedule, and the social contact wouldn't guarantee any improvement in advising.
  - #1-It is not the group experience that students are seeking. They will maintain a regular contact with an advisor who assists with individual planning and individual concerns of the student. #2-Again, it is not the group, but the individual experience that is important. Simple alternative—Every student meets with an advisor every quarter.
  - I do not think these ideas would be supported by anyone in this department. I can ask at a department meeting if you would like, but I bet I know the response I will receive.
  - I have participated in both kinds of advising groups, neither of which was very successful. The problem is that students must care enough about being advised to take certain steps; and they do not care enough to do so. They can not be made to care by instituting either one or two above.
-

**Exhibit 3: Suggestions as to how to improve advising in general, and to create greater contacts or connections with students (Department Chairs and/or Advisors, n=26)**

---

**Built-in stages or check-points requiring advising**

7

- We have some built-in mid-program check points. Plus we have course request forms for nearly all courses. And, the students know the value of advice and maintaining contact with the faculty.
- Unless departments place restrictions on course registration to ensure that all students see an advisor on a regular basis, some students will never seek assistance from an advisor. Devices such as a quarterly or annual progress check might be applied as new registration technology becomes available.
- Students can not officially enter the major or proceed through it without faculty contact wherein "advising" occurs. The practical effectiveness of such advising is qualified, sometimes, but students' personal need.
- As mentioned earlier, we utilize 4-5 formal advising points. The group itself requires students to meet with faculty during program
- At the time a student declares a major they must meet with the dept chair for an advisement session prior to declaration. They are not allowed to complete the declaration process until after they have met with their assigned faculty advisor. Students are given a card they must have their advisor sign and return to the department office.
- We have actively made changes during the past 3 years to address the problem of making contact with students for advising purposes. The first action we took was to delay submission of "declaration of major" cards to the Registrar until the student participated in an initial advisement orientation meeting. At this one-on-one meeting, anywhere from 30-60 minutes in length, the student's class plan /calendar is developed and orientation is provided to dept. programs and services for majors. Until we took this action, probably 1/3 of our newly declared majors would not follow through with the initial advisement meeting. Invariably, they were the same students who developed scheduling problems and added extra quarters to their college careers because of missed enrollment in year-long sequences, non-completion of appropriate prerequisites, etc. This new policy, which forces 100% participation in initial advisement, is already improving movement of our majors through the program. Also, more students are taking advantage of our special services for majors, which include priority registration in upper division courses, workshops for career-related concerns, and participation in professional related activities while still at WWU, such as research projects with faculty, membership in our local chapter of the ACSSA. When our new faculty-based advising program begins, we will continue to use the initial mandatory advisement appointment, but it now will be conducted by the student's academic advisor. This is augmented by informal contacts between students and faculty that occur in our laboratory classes and research labs which focus more on career advising. However, we will also

establish an enforced annual review--each spring quarter--of each student's upcoming academic year schedule with his/her academic advisor. This addition to our program should take care of one of our lingering problems, that of the student who "forgets" almost all of the information shared with him at initial advisement, who wanders off-course, often adding one, two, or three quarters of extra study to earn his degree.

- We have a plan for a three quarter project: It has been relatively successful. 1. Fall Quarter--general advising session. 2. Winter Quarter--professional and career day; study and work abroad opportunities. 3. Spring Quarter--student seminar; research presentation. 4. Spring Quarter--recognition event; outstanding graduate is introduced; graduates share their study or work plans

◇

### **Quality Advisors. Availability**

5

- Students will seek advising if they know that it is "good" advising and they can really get some help with their questions. When an advisor is trusted and helpful students will even bring their friends from other departments for advising help. Connecting with the students is important--first contacts when they become majors sets the tone for ongoing advising contacts. The first contacts should be by an advisor who can offer many facets of help and guidance.. To create greater contact and connection the institution needs to identify and put into place advisors who are well trained--professionals to begin the advising process with the students. It is as basic as building trust--someone to feel comfortable with for all those little nagging problems or questions--drop in anytime because the advisor always has the time.. Advising--the key to university success. Name any area of the university life/program that is not impacted by good/bad advising.
- Students will seek out advice if they receive quality information and input from their advisors. We have no system in place in our department other than assignment of advisors, and students seek out advisors who provide them with quality time and accurate information. Advising is the building block for a strong student-faculty relationship.
- Make it available and they will come. At least that has been our experience. Our students complete a course projection sheet for the academic year and meet with an advisor for assistance or to discuss problems with their plan of study, work schedule, baby-sitting, etc. When students first declare a major they are more likely to see an advisor for preregistration assistance. As they get more experienced with the system they need less advising but still take advantage of the opportunity to check in and make sure they are on track with major completion or to ask about course substitution, waivers, etc.
- Our dept. encourages students to ask questions and talk with staff or faculty to obtain direction in any aspect of their education. Having an extremely open door office policy with the staff helps our students not be afraid to ask questions of the staff and to go to the faculty when they have questions. We have received enough comments to know that we must have a more welcoming, open attitude of helpfulness and service, or we would not be receiving these comments. We had a

transfer student who became a major in our department instead of another based on the treatment she received when visiting campus during transitions. She felt the other department was so rude to her that she did not want to be a major there. We have also tried to devise ways to assist students who are confused about what to take to progress towards their degree. We talk with them and we offer them the form we use for Senior Evaluation to use as a planning tool so they can chart their progress and plan what courses to take what quarters, etc. Our faculty are helpful to students and try to assist them during office hours and at other times. We also try to say "I don't know" when we don't and to search out answers for the students or direct them where they might find the answers themselves. Students could be encouraged to register with the Registrar's Office and a department as a pre-major, transfer student, or interest student and be asked to make an advising appointment with the department. That might allow them to have the initial contact so that they would feel more comfortable coming and asking questions if they do have problems.

- Students want contact with professors--not necessarily with advising. Perhaps find another subject as a lure.



**Printed materials. workshops. career fairs. critical courses 5**

- Our College does the following to provide the support of a community for the students not only for advising but for their life at the University as a whole:
  - Active student clubs and honorary societies
  - Quarterly get-together such as potlucks
  - A quarterly "Welcome to Huxley" featuring College resources, contact people, student clubs, and opportunities to get involved.
  - Huxley's student newsletter is a weekly reminder of opportunities, events, and resources
  - Huxley's annual career and internship fair
  - Up-to-date listings of job and internship opportunities in Huxley's study/resource library.
  - Quarterly advising sessions for admitted majors and general information sessions for students interested in environmental studies.
  - Information tables and advising sessions at Transitions and Summerstart in the Summer.
  - Information tables and presentations at the community colleges about environmental studies degree programs and major requirements.
  - Student peer-advisors.
- There is no entry in the catalogue for departmental advising. The dept. office is good about directing students to the advisor. Action: Get an entry for departmental advising in the catalogue, and be sure it is listed under both "advising" and "departmental advising" in the index of university general catalogue.
- We have used peer advisors which works but requires considerable organization. Well prepared advisement material strategically placed to be readily accessible to students has been an easy and useful way for students to get info, they need.

We used to do an undergraduate student handbook which was distributed to all students when they were accepted. This worked but was labor intensive. We have used a student orientation at the beginning of the academic year, which included group advisement sessions by major. These worked well. We have organized our own career fairs and even offered a one credit seminar on careers in our field.

- Each department has a critical course or two, probably at 300 level, where students may need advising on proceeding with the major. We could require advising at that point.
- Try the following ideas:
  - Try offering a departmental workshop once each quarter re: careers and graduate school preparation. Announced to all majors in Departmental newsletter which goes out a month or two prior to registration for the following quarter-- perhaps even *required* as part of the core!
  - Or, offer a proseminar course in the major, as a core requirement--team-taught, introducing the various "areas of interest" in the field.
  - Or, how about a requirement in the methods course that students do a research paper on careers/graduate work in their major, perhaps researching the current cutting edge" directions of the field, which must be presented in class so other students benefit. (i.e., a required core course in the discipline; a part of methodology and "applied" coursework where discussion of the field makes sense.) Of course, this means consistency among faculty as to course content of the methods course. But what it also means, is that no EXTRA burden is put on faculty. Instead, discussion of the field and "group advising" of this sort can be an integral part of the program, within the context of a course already in place. Students can be "forced" to do their homework in this area, and receive faculty feedback on site. In fact, in one 300-level course recently taught by one of our faculty ("Work and Occupations"), students were assigned the task of researching various occupations, which involved interviewing a variety of individuals occupying a variety of positions. I was interviewed by one the students, who asked about my educational and employment background, and how I came to be employed as advisor in this department. I thought it was an excellent assignment, and this student was very pleased with how this assignment related to her own life and decision-making processes regarding career directions.
  - Or, perhaps a smaller advanced class—seminar size-- would be the place where faculty could provide informal advising and guidance regarding careers related to the profession.

## **0 Departmental meetings, clubs, social events**

**3**

- We use email lists to announce deadlines, meetings, scholarships. We meet at least once a year for a general premajor/major update and advising program meeting, with faculty, staff and students. WSU sends a recruiter for grad school yearly and we set up meetings. The Comm. club has various activities to encourage informal contact among students and with faculty (bowling, pizza, workshops, parties). Most faculty host class get-togethers at faculty homes or restaurants. "Communication Week" in the spring includes academic and social events (keynote

speakers, student panels, picnic). Practicum, internship, independent study involve advising about these opportunities in light of career choices or interests. Our students say that the feeling of a close-knit department is one of our strongest assets (Comm. student focus groups, 1995).

- We have a student chapter of the professional society in the discipline. We are beginning to schedule meetings of faculty with the student club to provide information about changes in the department, and this seems to be a good mechanism for encouraging students to see their advisors, and giving some kinds of advice even.

An active student club provides much opportunity for fruitful peer advising.

### **Pro-active opportunities. signature control**

2

- We do every pro-active measure possible. Tables at Summerstart, Western Preview, Western Parent's Day. We tell all our students to see us early--even if considering. Much more work--continuing to work in degrees.
- We have no signature control over advising, but we might be able to create something close to it with the computer--Joe St. Hilaire could give better advice than I on this point. If we are serious about providing the necessary advisement, we need to create a culture that fosters it. Departments could offer an evening of orientation and advisement for majors, at which a faculty member would explain the catalogue requirements for the major, a more elaborate rationale for the requirements should accompany the orientation to illuminate the architectonic of the discipline. I sometimes wonder why, if students report a desire for more and better advisement, they do not seek it out more frequently and with greater tenacity. Not everything is our fault.

### **No Ideas**

3

- It is axiomatic that those who need it most are the least likely to seek it. I have no ideas.
- I haven't heard this from our majors (that "students report a desire for more and better advising...")
- I am not sure this applies to this department.

**Exhibit 4: Difficulties to consider re: whether or not Western should attempt an accountability measure including departmental advising (Department Chairs and/or Advisors, n=30)**

---

◇

**Difficult to find a meaningful measure** of departmental advising 12

- The "measure" would probably need to be exact in order to appease legislator demands. Are we able to make the acceptable records?
- Major stumbling block is what and how to count:
  - It would seem difficult to apply one standard across campus to assess advising. The degree to which a department offers advising to students is, to a large extent, a function of curricular structure. Departments where prerequisites are non-existent (or not adhered to closely) and courses are non-sequential will require much less advising time than those which have highly structured and sequential degree requirements...Even using a time-to-degree measure of advising success would not be equitable unless the size of degree programs and frequency of course offerings are taken into account. Other factors which may make accountability via time-to-degree difficult are degree program requirement changes, students changing majors, etc.
  - Difficult to track number of advising contacts; impossible to track amount of informal advising
  - A bit difficult to measure—life and major—but possible and is emphasized in our department.
  - Do not just count numbers of advising contacts— this tells nothing
  - "I personally think this is a big waste of time. Why don't you develop an accountability measure that looks at how well educated our students become after two years and four years. Looking at the numbers of advising contacts will just lead us to encourage students to stop by more often so we can record one more visit to the advisor. That is incredibly stupid and short-sighted."
  - Every faculty member has office hours where advising takes place. This is easily measured but not an accurate representation of all of the advising that takes place.
  - Is "more advising" good or bad? ("It is sort of like psychiatric counseling: are we better if more people seek it or fewer?") Be wary of what represents an improvement numerically
  - Difficult to measure how *effective* advising is (may be better to measure from student end)

- Self-reported information is not credible, particularly to skeptical legislators  
 "Any measures of student contact that are quantifiable will be fudged because faculty will not keep records, and hardly can, if informal contact with students asking questions about classes and careers, which may or may not constitute advising"

◇ **Funding** 0  
3

- Consider first whether we have *substantial* room to improve in this area (department advising)-- it might be difficult to make the needed improvements to obtain the funds
- We should not stop what is good for Western's students with what will cause the legislature to allocate funds.
- How does the state plan to use the figures? In particular, we need to be aware that whatever figures we supply may be used against us at some later date. There seems to be an assumption among the offices and bureaus requesting this information that we are not doing enough, and whatever numbers we provide, we will be told we must improve on them, when in fact, there may not be much room for improvement

◇ **Time and effort** 2

- Include only aspects of advising that we can improve significantly without an unreasonable amount of effort.

**Exhibit 5: Suggestions and insights concerning the possibility of measuring "departmental advising" (Department Chairs and/or Advisors, n=30)**

---

◇

**Clearly define advising:**

12

- What constitutes advising? When does "talking about" become personal advice?
- Departmental advising can be viewed as an important part of the educational process—especially for depts. with "contract" systems or use of electives
- Define the types/categories of advising so measurement can be made easily
- Clearly define differences between academic/major advising, and professional/career/life advising. The former is easier to document. The latter is difficult to measure.
- Clarify "informal advising" contacts vs. "formal advising" contacts (the former is more difficult to measure)
- Some real work needs to go into evaluating what "advising" is, how it is used, is it effective, and what direction do we want advising to take in the future.
- Create a norm for accountability for the campus; all departments will meet or exceed the norm.

◇

**Clearly define what needs improvement:**

2

- If it is likely that we have substantial room to improve in this area, then yes (create a measure). If, however, it appears that we are already doing a good job, then it might be difficult to make the needed improvements to obtain the funds.
- How does the state plan to use the figures? In particular, we need to be aware that whatever figures we supply ... we will be told we must improve on them, when in fact, there may not be much room for improvement

**Measure both Quality and quantity:**

5

**Quantity:**

- **Measure number of student contacts,** along specific *checkpoints* or *phases* of the advising process; (find a mechanism that requires students to seek advice more regularly). Report advising in terms of number of advising visits by students, either as a gross for an entire department or as a ratio; number of students advised by department, per faculty/staff per department and the number of majors versus number of advisement sessions per quarter.
-

- **Time/Hours:**

Measures should account for time, as well as contacts. Time spent per contact can be tallied as an evaluation method to show how much time faculty, chair, and staff spend with students outside the classroom in an advising capacity; Provide detailed logging regarding designated advisor hours. Also number of hours spent involved in other endeavors concerning full range of advising matters: e.g., e-mail advising, phone advising, before and after class advising, time given to preparing/collecting advising documents like internship folder/association booklets, department or university mandated meetings devoted to issues concerning advising

- **Forms** can be made that can make it easy for contacts to be tallied. Forms could be turned in quarterly to whomever would be doing the evaluation.

- **Quality:**

- **Effectiveness:** Can a measurement be developed that does not interfere with the advising activity itself, so that our goal does not become increasing the "measurement" rather than the quality of what it is attempting to "measure?"

- **Try student reporting:**

As in teaching, the appropriate measure is not how much you do, but how effective it is. That is much more difficult to measure. It may be better to measure this from the student end: both effectiveness and how much they awarded themselves of advising opportunities. That way you can then put effort into providing both more opportunities and prompting more students to use the opportunities, and expect to get measurable improvements. Satisfaction of those advised; how were advisees questions answered, adequate answers, or not so good.



**Measure students' progress to degree**

2

- Those departments who are doing good advising will have students graduating on time;
- Using a time-to-degree measure of advising success would not be equitable unless the size of degree programs and frequency of course offerings are taken into account. Consider also degree program requirement changes, students changing majors, etc.



**Reportage** should reflect the full range of institutional advising activities: Academic Advising Center, Departments, and Programs (Define the various types/categories of advising activities) **3**

- 1) Summerstart
- 2) Transitions/transfer student advising/orientation for new students
- 3) Advisement or approval of a schedule before registration

- 4) Advisement between time of entry into Western and declaration of the major (need more emphasis on early advising/ pre-major advising; Officially encourage students to make early contact re advising; Stop the notion that students should complete GURS before starting on a major
- 5) Exploratory inquiries about department and major;
- 6) Pre-declaration, post-declaration
- 7) Degree planning advising
- 8) general university policy advising
- 9) Problem student advising (the ones who need more hand-holding than others as they take more time)
- 10) Professional/career direction advising
- 11) Internship or job-related advising
- 12) Graduate program advising

◇

**Create checkpoints** (consistent, mandatory points of advisement for all students; easy to document) 3

- Checkpoints can include signature approval: 1) applications for declaration, 2) Plans of study, 3) mid-program checkpoints, 4) senior evaluations for graduation. A file for each student in the department can contain each of these elements
- Give students a punch card showing each checkpoint; must be punched out and submitted to some oversight body
- Contacts can also be recorded when students seek general advisement concerning course selections, class scheduling/registration issues, internship opportunities and procedures, career options, and graduate school preparation.

◇

**Strategies, stages/phases:** Create a *system* of departmental advising that includes an array of strategies, as well as stages or phases of advising, to increase overall access and effectiveness: 4

- **Define staff and faculty roles** as to who does each phase of advising throughout the various stages:
  - Assign **centralized advising** at the departmental level, possibly staff member with specific responsibilities re: *academic advising*, as well as *administrative/technical* matters, including record-keeping; (A central location for consistency thorough record-keeping)
  - Assign **specific faculty responsibilities** for individual advising re: *careers, the profession*, etc.; clearly define how responsibilities are different from central location/staff, and develop procedures to systematically handle.
- **Provide checklist for students** so they understand *who* does what (who to see re: sign-offs, etc.), and have depts check off through stages.
- **Advisement materials.** Provide comprehensive and up-to-date materials (background requirements, major requirements, career information.)
  - Increase availability of material, and distribute at appropriate times
  - Clarity in presentation of core requirements and electives is essential;
  - WEB sites should be kept updated

**Appendix B:**  
**Copies of Cover Letter and**  
**Survey of Departmental Advising Patterns**  
**and Recommendations for Change, Fall 1997**

**TO:** Department Chairs and/or Advisors

**FROM:** Carl Simpson



**DATE:** 11/6/97

**SUBJECT:** Accountability and Departmental Advising

---

I apologize for hitting you with another request, but this is a way to gather a good deal of relevant information quickly, and at the moment I have a work-study student available to record your input.

As you know, advising is at the core of accountability, because good advising can help us improve on several of our measures, because one of our measures counts advising contacts, and because we hope it might be possible to improve that measure to include departmental advising. In addition, there has been a drift away from active faculty involvement in advising, and some argue that faculty involvement is particularly valuable.

Where we want to go with that too-common paradox--that those most qualified are already overworked--is a topic for discussion, along with many other topics regarding departmental advising. The attached informal survey of departments is intended to help lay an information base that we hope will support those discussions. The search at this point is purely for input, not for decisions.

I hope you and/or your departmental advisor(s) will be able to take a moment to complete this form and return it to me at MS 9081. Alternatively, if it would be more convenient, the work-study student who will be working on this project could arrange to interview you. If we haven't heard from you by late next week, she will call to see if you'd like to set up an appointment.

What we will do with your responses: We will tabulate numerical responses and record open-ended responses *verbatim* or close to it. I will do a bit of analysis (e.g., of differences by size of the major) and provide a summary report, including the numerical responses and the verbatim responses, to every chair and dean. That same material will be provided to the President and Provost, and whatever group is called together to discuss possible directions for the future.

Thanks very much for your time!!

NOTE: The information you provide will in no case be used for any evaluation, invidious comparison, etc. As soon as we mark receipt of your response, we will detach the first page, identifying your department. All data recording and analysis will be blind to department name. The report of findings will in no case refer to departments by name.

**Survey of Departmental Advising Patterns and Recommendations for Change, Nov. '97**

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Best advising contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate number of majors at present: \_\_\_\_\_

THANKS VERY MUCH FOR YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.  
THE FORM SEEMS LONG BECAUSE OF ITS LAYOUT, BUT IT SHOULD BE QUICK  
TO COMPLETE.

*To begin, please use the questions below to summarize how you currently advise students with regard to each of the advising needs listed below. Please add any comments needed to clarify how you go about advising.*

1. Pre-major advising (including transfer advising, where applicable)

A. How many of your majors came to you having pretty well decided on the major, and how many needed advising and information before deciding?

1. Almost all had decided      2. Most had decided      3. Half and half  
 4. Most needed advising      5. Almost all needed advising      9. Don't Know

B. How much of your pre-major advising is done by each of the following?

	All	Most	Half	Some	None
1. Dept. Chair	1	2	3	4	5
2. One or more staff advisors	1	2	3	4	5
3. One or more faculty advisors	1	2	3	4	5
4. Student advisors	1	2	3	4	5
5. Others ( _____ )	1	2	3	4	5

C. How difficult would it be to log,/record pre-major advising contacts?

1. No problem; do it now or could do it easily  
 2. Some nuisance, but OK  
 3. Possible, but a serious bother

2. Major declaration and plan of study.

A. How many of the students who wish to declare a major in your department, are you unable to accept, if any? (A guess is OK here).

1. All accepted      2. A few refused      3. 5-20% refused      4. Over 20% refused.

B. What proportion of your majors develop a written plan of study left on file with an advisor, at the time of declaring a major?

1. All 2. Most 3. Half 4. Some 5. few or none

C. What proportion of your majors talk with an advisor, to discuss the major, suggested courses, etc., at the time of declaring a major?

1. All 2. Most 3. Half 4. Some 5. few or none

D. How much of your pre-major advising is done by each of the following?

	All	Most	Half	Some	None
1. Dept. Chair	1	2	3	4	5
2. One or more staff advisors	1	2	3	4	5
3. One or more faculty advisors	1	2	3	4	5
4. Student advisors	1	2	3	4	5
5. Others ( _____ )	1	2	3	4	5

E. How difficult would it be to log/record advising contacts for the purpose of declaring a major?

1. No problem; do it now or could do it easily
2. Some nuisance, but OK
3. Possible, but a serious bother
4. Out of the question; major nuisance or impossible

3. Academic advising after major declaration (concerning course selection, special opportunities such as internships, curricular specializations, etc., but not concerning careers or larger life planning issues).

A. If you feel you can offer a meaningful estimate, please indicate how many total advising contacts of this type the average major makes per year in the junior or senior year:

N u m b e r : 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 + 99. No way to estimate

B. How much of your academic advising after declaration is done by each of the following?

	All	Most	Half	Some	None
1. Dept. Chair	1	2	3	4	5
2. One or more staff advisors	1	2	3	4	5
3. One or more faculty advisors	1	2	3	4	5
4. Student advisors	1	2	3	4	5
5. Others ( _____ )	1	2	3	4	5

C. How difficult would it be to log/record your academic advising contacts after declaration?

1. No problem; do it now or could do it easily
2. Some nuisance, but OK
3. Possible, but a serious bother
4. Out of the question; major nuisance or impossible

4. Life planning and career or graduate school advising.

A. If you feel you can offer a meaningful estimate, please indicate how many total advising contacts of this type the average major makes per year in the junior or senior year:

N u m b e r : 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 + 99. No way to estimate

B. How much of this kind of advising is done by each of the following?

	All	Most	Half	Some	None
1. Dept. Chair	1	2	3	4	5
2. One or more staff advisors	1	2	3	4	5
3. One or more faculty advisors	1	2	3	4	5
4. Student advisors	1	2	3	4	5
5. Others ( _____ )	<sup>1</sup>	2	3	4	5

C. How difficult would it be to log/record this type of advising contacts?

1. No problem; do it now or could do it easily
2. Some nuisance, but OK
3. Possible, but a serious bother
4. Out of the question; major nuisance or impossible

5. Does your department have an advising office, signed as such, with advising hours, etc.?

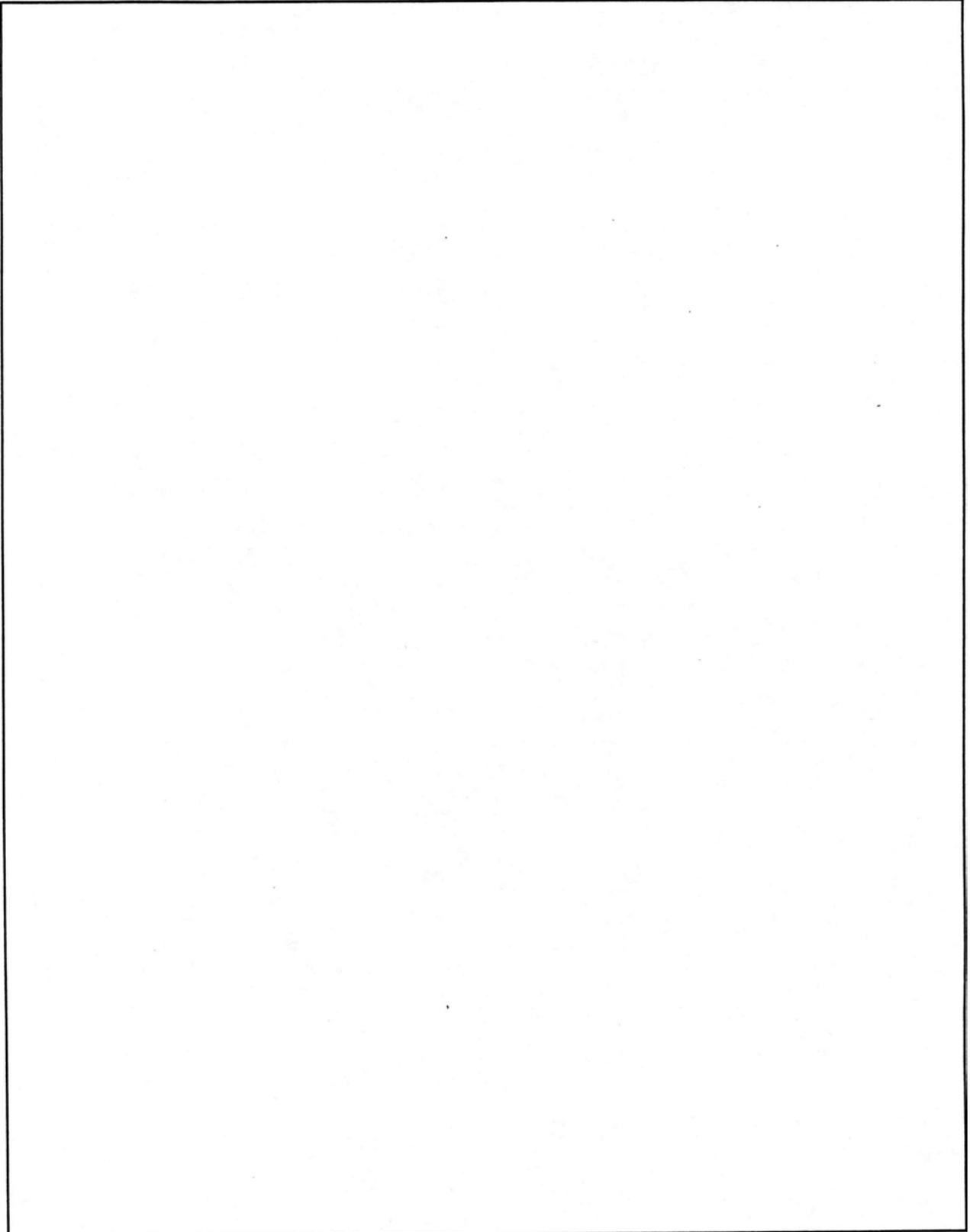
1. Yes, a separate office.
2. No, but one or more faculty or staff offices are designated as places to do advising
3. No, staff or the chair direct students to advisors
4. No, all run informally

6. Is there anything else we should know to understand how advising is done in you department?

*When a group is put together to make recommendations concerning departmental advising at Western, they will very likely address the questions on each of the following pages. It would speed the process greatly if you would offer your observations and suggestions regarding each issue, so that we may compile them as a starting point. Thanks.*

7. We will have the opportunity to revise our accountability measure of advising to include departmental advising, if doing so seems practicable and desirable. Please offer any insights you have concerning whether or not we should attempt a measure including departmental advising, and what we can, cannot, should, and/or should not include in a revised measure of advising.

8. A great deal of interest has been expressed in developing ways to get faculty more involved in departmental advising. Please share any ideas you have about how your department is doing this, if it is, how you could envision doing it, whether or not it is a good idea, whether different types or stages of advising should be handled by faculty or by staff, etc.



9. Students report a desire for more and better advising, especially in departments. At the same time, they seem not to be especially active in seeking out advising, and we don't seem too effective at drawing them into advising. Please offer any ideas you have, experiments your department has undertaken, etc. to improve advising in general, to improve any particular aspect of advising, to create greater contact or connection with students, to create contexts for discussing career plans, graduate schools, etc., or any other suggestions you have.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their suggestions and ideas regarding student advising.

10. One idea that has received some attention during accountability discussions of ways to enhance the student experience at Western might be called "faculty mentoring" of new students (perhaps only freshmen; perhaps any new student). Two main two models have emerged so far.

1) Faculty mentoring as service: Faculty would volunteer to have a small number (perhaps 10-15) new students assigned as their advisees. Faculty would commit to sponsoring some number of social gathering with their advisees, and some number of individual advising discussions during the first quarter, and perhaps some later. Students might come entirely voluntarily, or an advisor's signature might be required before registration.

2) Faculty would offer one credit seminars during the students' first quarter, modeled along the lines of student "interest groups," which have apparently worked extremely well at the UW. The course would have a substantive focus--some lively and accessible special interest of the professor. In addition, the course, kept small, at perhaps 15 students, would afford an opportunity for students to have informal conversations with a professor about Western, higher education, choosing majors, etc. Indeed, the instructor could be assigned as the student's advisor also. Such courses could be paid over and above the regular appointment, or could be built into the teaching load.

Would you please comment on the advisability of either of these plans, suggest some other model, indicate why the whole idea is great, foolish, irrelevant, or whatever.