

# Plymouth State University

## FACULTY MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

3:35 – 5:00 PM, Heritage Commons

- I. Accept the draft minutes of the April 6, 2011, meeting.** Minutes are available online on the Faculty Governance blog. You will be required to log in to myPlymouth to view the minutes. Use the headings to the left and click on “Faculty Meeting Minutes.” Then, in the right-hand column, click on the link below the title, “Faculty Meeting minutes, April 6, 2011, DRAFT.”

*The Faculty Governance Blog may be found at <http://www.plymouth.edu/committee/faculty/>*

### **II. Reports**

- A. Sara Jayne Steen, President (to be sent separately)
- B. Julie Bernier, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (to be sent separately)

### **III. New Business**

#### **A. Resolutions of the Standing Committees**

*None*

- B. **DISCUSSION: (Terri Dautcher)** The Provost has asked the Steering Committee to form a task force to look at the academic calendar. We need volunteers for a seven-month appointment to that group.
- C. **MOTION from the Faculty Steering Committee (Terri Dautcher)** to dissolve the Faculty Loan and Grant Committee as described in the Faculty Bylaws (Article XI, Section F.6).
- D. **MOTION from the Faculty Steering Committee (Terri Dautcher)** to amend Section 2.1, Definition of Faculty Status, in the Faculty Handbook as described below:

#### PROPOSED WORDING (*changes in italics*):

*Principal administrators and academic deans who have established faculty rank with an academic department at Plymouth State University are eligible to vote in annual faculty elections.*

#### ORIGINAL WORDING:

Administrators with faculty rank are the following:

President

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies

Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Community Outreach

Director of the Library

- E. **MOTION from the Faculty Steering Committee (Terri Dautcher)** to amend Article III of the Faculty Bylaws as described below:

PROPOSED WORDING (*changes in italics*):

Membership in the faculty shall be restricted to those persons employed at Plymouth State University who have appointments in one of the following categories: Tenure-Track Faculty, *Research Faculty*, or Contract Faculty. Only such members of the faculty may vote on issues at faculty meetings, vote in faculty elections, or be elected to faculty offices and committees. The one exception is that the adjunct faculty will each year elect an adjunct faculty member to serve as a voting participant of the Faculty Welfare Committee for a one-year term.

According to the Faculty Handbook, Section 2.1 Definition of Faculty Status, *administrators who have established faculty rank with an academic department at Plymouth State University are eligible to vote in annual faculty elections. Such administrators, however, may not be elected to faculty committees.*

ORIGINAL WORDING:

Membership in the faculty shall be restricted to those persons employed at Plymouth State University who have appointments in one of the following categories: Tenure-Track Faculty, Faculty-in-Residence, or Contract Faculty. Only such members of the faculty may vote on issues at faculty meetings, vote in faculty elections, or be elected to faculty offices and committees. The one exception is that the adjunct faculty will each year elect an adjunct faculty member to serve as a voting participant of the Faculty Welfare Committee for a one-year term.

According to the Faculty Handbook, Section 2.1 Definition of Faculty Status, administrators with academic rank are the President, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies, the Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Community Outreach, and the Director of the Library. All such administrators with academic rank are members of the voting faculty. However, of the listed administrators, only the Director of the Library is eligible to be elected to faculty offices and committees.

- F. **MOTION from the Faculty Steering Committee (Terri Dautcher)** to amend Article V, Section A (Faculty Representatives) of the Faculty Bylaws as described below:

PROPOSED WORDING (*additions in italics*):

**A. Representatives to University System of New Hampshire (USNH) and USNH Board of Trustees Committees and Councils.**

The following faculty representatives shall be elected annually by ballot at the regular annual faculty elections. These representatives shall assume office at the beginning of the next academic year. These faculty representatives shall attend the meetings of the respective Board and System committees and councils and report periodically to the faculty. In the absence of the faculty representative, the Faculty Welfare Committee shall designate a temporary representative.

1. Representative to the Board of Trustees – elected by the faculty for a one-year term. *The faculty representative will report, in writing, to the Faculty Steering Committee after every Board of Trustees meeting.*
2. Representative to the Trustees' Financial Affairs Committee – elected by the faculty for a one-year term. *The faculty representative will report, in writing, to the Faculty Steering Committee after every Board of Trustees Financial Affairs Committee meeting.*
3. Representative to the Trustees' Programs and Services Committee – Chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee or Chair's designee.

4. Representative to the System Personnel Policy Council (Faculty/PAT) – selected annually by the Faculty Welfare Committee from among its members.

- G. **MOTION from the Faculty Steering Committee (Terri Dautcher)** to amend Article IX, The Steering Committee, section C, of the Faculty Bylaws as described below:

PROPOSED WORDING (additions in italics):

C. Duties:

1. As needed, the Steering Committee shall meet prior to the week of the faculty meeting to assist the Faculty Speaker in creating an agenda for that meeting. Except program additions and/or policy changes, all decisions of the Principal Policy-Making Committees will appear on the faculty meeting agenda under one standing item titled “Resolutions of the Standing Committees” as described in Article VI.
2. The Steering Committee shall report the formation and dissolution of task forces and ad hoc groups, as well as other activities of their committee, to the faculty by means of the “Resolutions of the Standing Committees” as described in Article VI.
3. The Steering Committee, at the request of one of the Principal Policy-Making Committees, or at the request of any group of at least ten faculty, will call a Faculty Forum meeting, as described in Article VII.
4. At the beginning of each academic year, the Steering Committee shall consult with the President to determine University planning issues.
5. At intervals of not more than five years, effective Fall 2009, the Steering Committee shall appoint a Task Force to coordinate faculty evaluation of the Principal Administrators.
6. *The Steering Committee shall review the agenda for each meeting of the Board of the Trustees and its subcommittees.*
7. The Steering Committee shall not be empowered to approve policy resolutions passed by policy-making committees.

- H. **MOTION from the Department of History & Philosophy (John Krueckeberg)** to create the BS in Social Studies Teacher Certification (5-12) major, housed in the HiPhy Department, and delete the Social Studies Teacher Certification (5-12) Option of the BS in Social Science major housed in the Social Sciences department.

Notes: 1) The BS in Social Science with a contract option will remain in the Department of Social Sciences; 2) This motion reflects the Memorandum of Understanding voted upon and approved by the members of the Social Science Department (including the historians); and 3) This motion was approved by both the Council for Teacher Education and the Curriculum Committee.

Rationale: 90% of SSTC majors concentrate in history; history is 40% of Praxis II and 40% of NH SS Frameworks; the only full-time SSTC faculty member (Mike Koppish) has been hired into the HiPhy Department; History already shares .25FTE with SSTC (Whitney Howarth); every history tenure-track professor advises students in SSTC.

- I. **MOTION from the Academic Affairs Committee (Eric Hoffman)** to amend the Academic Integrity Policy as indicated in
- J. Appendix A: AAC Modifications to the Academic Integrity Policy on page 6. (Changes/additions to the Policy in underlined italics).

**Rationale:** Several faculty members from the Academic Affairs committee have noted that recently a number of students have been brought under our current policy for hearings with the Academic Integrity Panel for violations that were largely unintentional. The committee engaged in several conversations

during the past academic year to examine our policy and suggest potential changes. We felt that our current policy does not allow faculty the discretion to use an unintentional violation as a teachable moment and help students learn from their mistakes. We looked at policies from other universities and noted that some have various levels of integrity violations (e.g., Rutgers University: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>). We also examined a review paper that summarized some of the current literature in academic integrity with regards to intentional and unintentional violations:

<http://northumbria.openrepository.com/northumbria/bitstream/10145/107054/2/Harvey,%20Robson%20-%20The%20accidental%20plagiarist...%20Article.pdf>

We also received input from several faculty members with suggested changes to the policy. In March, a subcommittee drafted the following changes to the policy which were approved by the full committee in April.

**Executive Summary of Changes:**

1. Defines unintentional and intentional violations of the policy.
2. Procedures for unintentional violations are new. There will be a review by two people and then the opportunity for the instructor to help the student learn the correct academic practice.
3. New policy requires that students have the opportunity to meet with the Dept. Chair and instructor for any type of violation.

**K. MOTION from the Jeremiah Duncan** that the Faculty adopt the following resolution:

Whereas there is a considerable amount of litter on the campus and streets of Plymouth,

Whereas the University community is largely responsible for the litter,

Whereas we have identified a pervasive culture of littering among the University community,

Whereas we are taking responsibility and initiative for changing that culture,

and

Whereas Spring Fling weekend is known to be a time when significant amounts of litter are strewn onto the campus and streets by the University community,

We, the Faculty of Plymouth State University hereby resolve that:

- If the campus and streets of Plymouth are found to be full of litter after Spring Fling 2011, the University should withhold all resources for the planning and executions of Spring Fling 2012, and
- The following message should be disseminated broadly, sternly, and immediately to the University community:

Plymouth State University is hereby taking swift and immediate action to change the culture of littering that exists among the University community, to clean up the litter that has been left on campus and on the streets of the surrounding community, and to ensure that our campus and streets will not become full of litter again. As part of this effort, volunteers will be picking litter up on the morning of Sunday, May 8. If they find significant amounts of litter related to Spring Fling activities, Spring Fling 2012 will be officially canceled, receiving no official funding or resources of any kind from the University.

- L. **MOTION from the Faculty Welfare Committee (Anne Lebreche)** to amend the Faculty Bylaws pertaining to the Faculty Welfare Committee under **Section b. Function, subpoint 3.** (Changes/additions to the Policy in underlined italics).

**7. Faculty Welfare Committee**

b. Function:

(1) To represent the interests of the faculty as a group of professional persons; (reference Bylaws of the Trustees, The Faculty Welfare Committee). The Committee will advocate for the welfare of the faculty and will make recommendations to the faculty and/or administration on matters affecting the welfare of the faculty, including but not limited to: academic freedom; promotion and tenure; compensation and benefits; workload; personnel policies; professional ethics; and "quality of life" issues related to working conditions.

(2) To serve as a point of contact and consult with other groups, constituencies, and/or administrators when they formulate, revise, or propose policies affecting faculty welfare.

*(3) To select ~~one~~ two of its members to serve as ~~a~~ representatives to the USNH System Personnel Policy Council meetings. One member shall serve as a voting member; the second member will serve as the alternate.*

(4) To report annually on its activities to the full faculty.

(5) To request a Faculty Forum or a special meeting of the faculty, if in the Committee's judgment one is necessary.

(6) To perform such other duties as specified by the Faculty Handbook and by these Bylaws.

**Rationale:** The SPPC is an advisory council to the Administrative Board. The Administrative Board includes the 5 CEOs (4 Presidents and the Chancellor). By state statute the Administrative Board has authority over many personnel actions and policies. In some cases policies also require approval by the Board of Trustees. Presently, one administrator, one faculty, one PAT and one O/S staff from each institution may vote (plus one from the Cooperative Extension). This year, non-unionized clinical and research faculty from UNH were also granted representation.

Each constituency group has a second representative who is an alternate. These representatives do not vote, but participate in Council discussions. This bylaw change motion will allow PSU Faculty the same number of participants on the Council as are afforded other campuses and constituency groups.

M. **PRESENTATION of the Distinguished Adjunct Faculty Award**

N. **PRESENTATION of the Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award**

O. **PRESENTATION of the Distinguished Faculty Award**

**IV. Brief Announcements**

## Appendix A: AAC Modifications to the Academic Integrity Policy

(Changes/additions to the Policy in *underlined italics*).

**Academic Integrity Policy** (with changes from pp. 46-48 in the 2010-11 catalog):

Academic integrity is the foundation of the pursuit of knowledge. All members of the academic community are expected to be dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge in an honest, responsible, respectful and ethical manner. Every violation of academic integrity is an affront to the academic community. Violations of academic integrity make fair evaluation impossible and cast doubt upon the seriousness with which students accept the responsibility of acquiring an education.

Members of the academic community are expected to report all instances of those violations which come to their attention. Both faculty and administration consider it their duty, as guardians of academic standards and intellectual honesty, to enforce the following policy by prosecuting all cases of violation of academic integrity to the fullest extent. Students are urged to consider that it is the toleration of violations of academic integrity, and not the reporting of it, that is dishonorable.

### Definitions

A violation of academic integrity includes any act which portrays a member of the academic community as having acquired knowledge through legitimate study or research which, in fact, has been stolen. Violation of academic integrity includes also any act which gains one member of the academic community an unfair advantage over another. This includes any act hindering the academic accomplishment of another.

*Violations of academic integrity are classified by Plymouth State University into two categories: intentional and unintentional. Intentional violations involve a deliberate attempt to deceive in order to gain unfair advantage. Unintentional violations are associated with poor academic practice stemming from ignorance or misunderstanding of requirements.*

Examples of *intentional* violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Providing or using unauthorized books, notes, or other sources of information during an examination.
2. Submitting another person's work as one's own, that is, plagiarism. This includes, for example: copying during examinations; purchasing papers or taking them from Internet/World Wide Web resources; copying papers, reports, laboratory results or computer work; quoting or paraphrasing library or Internet/World Wide Web sources without proper citations.
3. Doing work for which another person will receive credit. This includes, for example, allowing one's examination answers, reports, laboratory results or computer work to be submitted by another person as his or her own work.
4. Falsifying, through forgery or other alteration, academic documents such as transcripts, registration materials, withdrawal forms or grade reports.
5. Reading, removing or copying, without authorization, or stealing any academic document, exam or academic record maintained by any member of the faculty or administration.
6. Using unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, at the computer terminal or on field placement.
7. Stealing, copying or destroying another person's computer program or file, deliberately preventing or depriving another's access to the University computer system or resources, or impeding the system's performance.
8. Stealing, or removing without authorization, books or periodicals from the library, or mutilating library materials.
9. Falsifying or fabricating data or results of research or field work.
10. Lying in connection with an academic integrity hearing.

Unintentional violations are often associated with plagiarism. Examples of unintentional violations include, but are not limited to: paraphrasing, citing, or quoting poorly or incorrectly.

## **Procedure**

In cases where a violation of academic integrity in course work is suspected, or in other cases of suspected violations, the individual making the discovery must initiate proceedings as prescribed in the following list of required actions.

### **I. Action within the department – Examination of the suspected violation**

1. Any violation of academic integrity, whether intentional or unintentional, should be examined by at least two people:
  - a. In the case of a violation of academic integrity associated with a class, these people shall include the instructor and the Chair of the department.
  - b. In other cases, these people shall include whoever is making the complaint and whoever is in charge of the area of complaint.
  - c. In the case of stealing, removing, or mutilating library materials, in conjunction with a course, the Library shall notify the course instructor of the violation. The course instructor shall pursue the complaint. Library personnel may be asked to appear as witnesses.
2. The examination shall be thorough enough to establish with reasonable confidence whether a violation of academic integrity occurred, who the parties involved are and that accusations can be justly made and are supportable. The examination shall proceed as quickly as possible and will generally be complete within one week.
3. The student, or students, shall be made aware of any accusations, be given a copy of this policy and have the opportunity to meet with both examiners and respond. Any supporting evidence shall be gathered and verified as thoroughly as possible. All of this shall be done in a non-threatening manner.
4. There are three possible outcomes of the examination:
  - a. Insufficient evidence of a violation: If the examiners are not reasonably confident at this point that a specific student violated the Academic Integrity Policy and that the evidence of that violation is substantial, the matter shall be dropped, except that the department shall take steps to remedy any procedures or conditions that may have led to the violation or to the lack of evidence, e.g., an exam which has been compromised may be canceled and/or readministered by the department.
  - b. Unintentional Violations: If the examiners are reasonably confident that a specific student violated the Academic Integrity Policy, the evidence of that violation is substantial, but the violation is judged to be unintentional, the Chair shall notify the student by letter of the violation and recommendations for remediation. Because the violation was deemed to be unintentional (e.g., a result of poor academic practice), the student and instructor shall work together to give the student the opportunity to learn the correct academic practice. As with all grades, instructors will evaluate the assignment in question and may account for the violation in their evaluation. If the student disagrees with the judgment of the examiners, s/he can request that the Chair notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the violation so that the Panel on Academic Integrity can be convened.
  - c. Intentional Violations: If the examiners are reasonably confident that a specific student violated the Academic Integrity Policy and that evidence of that violation is substantial and the violation is deemed to be intentional, the Chair shall notify the student by letter of the specific violations of academic integrity of which the student stands accused. If not already provided, a copy of this policy shall be enclosed. The Chair shall notify the Vice President for Academic affairs that a potential violation has occurred and request that the Panel on Academic Integrity be convened. A copy of the letter to the student

and all supporting evidence shall be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. If the instructor thinks that a lesser or greater penalty than an F in the course is warranted, a statement of recommendation, with explanation, may accompany the supporting evidence. The complainant (or his/her representative) shall attend the Panel hearing.

## II. **Actions by the student**

Students shall:

1. Honor any requests by complainants and/or department chairs for interviews concerning any alleged violations of academic integrity. This is the first and best opportunity for the student to present ameliorating evidence and/or arguments of innocence.
2. Continue to attend the course until notified otherwise.
3. Read the Academic Integrity Policy. If the student has not received a current copy by the time of the Vice President's letter (see III.), it should be requested of the Vice President's office.
4. If the student wishes to attend the hearing of the Panel on Academic Integrity, they shall notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs within 72 hours of receipt of the Vice President's letter. A student may choose not to attend the hearing and instead may submit a written statement to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for consideration by the Panel on Academic Integrity. Any supporting evidence for the student's case may be presented by the student at the hearing. If the student wishes additional witnesses to be called, the Office of the Vice President must be notified so that those witnesses may be called for the hearing. If the student fails to notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs of their intent to attend the hearing or submit a written statement to the Panel on Academic Integrity, and the Vice Presidents Office has confirmation that the student has been properly notified of the hearing, the allegation of a violation of academic integrity is sustained and the hearing will be conducted to determine the sanction.
5. A student wishing to appeal a judgment of the Panel may do so to the Vice President for Academic Affairs within one week of the hearing. The appeal should be in writing, stating all reasons that the student has for appealing the decision of the Panel. If the penalty involves failure in a course, the student should continue to attend until a decision is rendered at the appeal hearing.
6. If found guilty, the student must comply with all requirements of the Panel.

## III. **Actions within the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs**

1. Upon receipt of the letter (I.4.c) the Vice President shall officially notify the student of the charges and shall refer the matter to the Panel on Academic Integrity:

The Panel on Academic Integrity will consist of:

- a. The Chair of the Faculty Academic Affairs Committee, or his or her designee, who will chair the Panel.
- b. A Plymouth State University faculty member selected from a faculty pool.
- c. The Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies.
- d. Two student members.

The two student members and four student alternates will be elected by the voting members of the Student Senate. Students on disciplinary probation and those not in good academic standing are not eligible to serve on the Panel. All elected student members must agree to be available to serve on the Panel during the academic year and the months of January and June. In the event that members or alternates are unable to serve on the Panel for a specific case, the Chair of the Panel will appoint members to serve for the case. If this is not possible, the Panel may meet with as few as four members present.

2. The Panel hearing shall be arranged as soon as possible. The student Panel members, witnesses and the person making the complaint shall be notified. (The student may choose not to attend.)
3. Regardless of the outcome of a hearing or appeal, a record of the proceedings and supporting evidence will be kept for the prescribed time (see Records).
4. The Vice President shall hold an appeal hearing as soon as possible upon receiving a written appeal. The Vice President may call upon any person involved when the appeal is considered. After the appeal, action referred to in Section III.3. is modified if appropriate.
5. The record of each student found guilty by the Panel shall be checked for prior convictions. If this is a second conviction, the Panel will be reconvened no sooner than eight days, nor later than 14 days, from the date of the second conviction to decide whether to expel the student from the University, to suspend the student for a period no less than one year, or to assign some other penalty as appropriate. If the student has appealed the second or later conviction to the Vice President, however, the Panel will be convened no later than seven days after the failure of the appeal.
6. The judgment of the Panel shall then be carried out.

In cases when the penalty is:

- a. an "F" on an assignment, the instructor shall be responsible for implementing that sanction as part of his/her regular record keeping for the course. The Chair of the Panel on Academic Integrity shall notify, in writing, the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the sanction.
- b. an "AF" for a course, or a suspension or an expulsion, the Chair of the Panel on Academic Integrity shall notify, in writing, the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the sanction. The Vice President shall then be responsible for notifying the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Registrar and the Director of Financial Aid, in writing, of the sanction. For a grade of "AF," the Registrar shall enter this grade on the transcript. For a suspension or an expulsion, the Registrar shall enter a notation of academic suspension or expulsion on the student transcript. If the sanction in question is a suspension, it shall be considered effective at the beginning of the next full semester. A student shall have the right to petition the Vice President for Academic Affairs for removal of the notation of academic suspension from the transcript. At the time of graduation or two years after the academic suspension, whichever comes first, the student may petition for the removal of the suspension. Pending an appeal, an expulsion shall begin on the date of conviction.

#### **IV. Actions by the Panel**

1. Upon being notified of an impending hearing by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, each Panel member will, prior to the hearing, visit the Vice President's office and examine the materials for the case.
2. The Panel will, at the hearing:
  - a. hear the complaint by the instructor or person making the complaint
  - b. hear any explanation or expression of mitigating circumstances the student may wish to give, if present
  - c. question both the student and the person making the complaint as necessary
  - d. decide the case and any penalty
  - e. tell the student the result of the hearing, explain the consequences and inform the student about the right of appeal if found guilty.
3. The Chair of the Panel will inform the student in writing of the Panel's action. Copies of this letter will be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and to the person making the complaint. All documents shall be returned to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
4. If the Panel is reconvened because of a student's second or later conviction, the Chair of the Panel will obtain from the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs the files from the Panel hearings. The Panel will then decide what further penalty to assess (see Penalties). The

Chair will write a letter to the student, with a copy to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, informing the student of the further penalty and of the right of appeal.

## **Penalties**

*Students found guilty of unintentional violations will have the opportunity to learn to correct their mistake. No further penalty shall be assigned by the instructor other than their evaluation of the assignment.*

In most cases when students are found guilty of *an intentional* violation of academic integrity for the first time, whether by admission of guilt or by the findings of the Panel on Academic Integrity, and where the incident occurs in connection with a specific course, the Panel will decide that they be excluded from further participation in the course, receiving a grade of AF on their transcripts. An AF signifies administrative failure, signifying that the course has been failed for administrative reasons; the impact is the same as an F in all other regards. In those cases where, in the judgment of the Panel of Academic Integrity, the offense is unusually serious, the Panel may also decide to suspend the students from the University for no more than one year. In those cases where in the judgment of the Panel on Academic Integrity there are extenuating circumstances, such as cases where the incident clearly occurred because of ignorance rather than intention, or in cases of plagiarism where the amount of material plagiarized was extremely small, the Panel may decide on a lesser penalty than AF in the course: an AW in the course or a grade of F on the assignment. If the faculty member in whose class the offense occurred recommends a penalty, the Panel may take this into account in reaching its decision.

In cases where a first conviction for a violation of academic integrity occurs apart from a particular course or where it has a minor or tenuous impact on a course, the penalty may be simply having a record of conviction (see Records). Here too, however, in cases where the offense is unusually serious, the Panel may decide to suspend the students from the University for no more than one year. A record of conviction is, at any rate, a serious consequence of a first offense. The second conviction for violating academic integrity will normally result either in suspension for no less than one year or expulsion. Also, if the second offense occurs within a particular course, an AF will be posted on the transcript as the final grade for that course.

If a violation of academic integrity involves damage to University property or otherwise violates the law, legal or disciplinary action may also be taken.

## **Records**

*In cases where a student has been found to have unintentionally violated the Academic Integrity Policy, no official records shall be kept.*

If the student *is referred to the Panel and* is found not guilty of violating academic integrity, all evidence will be retained by the Vice President for Academic Affairs for a period of three years. The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be the only person with access to these records. After three years, all evidence shall be destroyed. A record shall be retained of the action taken by the Panel, only accessible to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Whenever students have been convicted *by the Panel* of violating academic integrity, a record of the conviction shall be retained permanently by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, all faculty and principal administrators with legitimate need to know, and the student in question shall have the privilege of access to the record. The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall retain all evidence related to the case until three years after the student has left the University. A record of the conviction shall be reportable to the Panel if the student is convicted of a subsequent violation of the Academic Integrity Policy and to any outside agencies legally requesting this information until the student graduates or five years after the conviction.

## **Appendix D: Report from Academic Affairs Sub-Committee on Advising**

### Executive Summary

April 18, 2011

In response to PSU Student Senate Resolution S. R. 08 (F) 5 the Academic Affairs Committee administered surveys on advising to students in seven departments during AY 2009/2010. In AY 2010/2011, four focus groups were conducted with students (2 in fall; 2 in spring). As a result, the subcommittee on advising offers the following summary of results and comments.

**Results of surveys** in AY 2009/2010: 288 surveys were completed. The results of that survey indicated that approximately 98% of students were happy with their advisor and the advising process.

**Results of focus groups** in AY 2010/2011: Students are not sure how many credits are required for their degree and may rely on advisors for that information; word-of-mouth is considered a reliable source of information, especially when it comes to courses; most students know about and use advising tools such as the Curriculum Planning guides and the Degree Evaluation; students tend to monitor their progress once a semester; students believe that their needs change during their time at PSU, with more career advice needed in the last year; most students perceive advising as guidance, support and final “check” on their successful completion of the degree; students who change majors need more advising support and may be more reluctant to look for help themselves; students find value in having a long term plan that lays out their degree requirements; a single portal with customized information (i.e. degree evaluation on the curriculum planning sheet, rather than two separate formats) would be considered an improvement to the current tools; students expect that their advisor is knowledgeable about courses and majors in their discipline; students may not be aware of policies such as Catalog changes, the ability to change Catalog year, and the ability to change advisors.

**Comments:** The action taken by the Academic Affairs sub-committee on advising was in response to the Student Senate Resolution above. We bring this to the academic affairs committee for consideration and recommend that it be submitted by the chair of Academic Affairs to the Student Senate. The AAC does not support introducing advisor evaluations in the P&T process. (Full Report attached)

### Report to Student Senate

Submitted on Behalf of the AAC by: Annette Holba, Roxana Wright

April 18, 2011

### **History:**

The Student Senate passed a resolution in 2008 (See attached at the end of this document as Appendix A) asking the faculty to investigate advising on campus with the intention of including advising as a category for faculty evaluation. In AY 2009/2010, the AAC appointed a subcommittee on advising (Ahl, Coykendall, Holba) to create a survey and pilot the survey during advising weeks in Fall 2009. As a result, the following departments participated in the advising survey: Health and Human Performance, Language and Linguistics, English, Criminal Justice, Undecided, Child Development.

Total number of surveys completed: 288 (see original survey attached to the end of this document in Appendix B)

The results of that survey indicated that approximately 98% of students were happy with their advisor and the advising process. We also learned that upon completion of the survey, we had more and different questions as a result of that survey.

After discussing the results of the survey, we believed that it would be better to engage in focus groups rather than conduct more surveys so that we could probe student responses and gain clearer interpretive understanding.

Therefore, we received approval from the AAC to continue our investigation with focus groups in fall 2010 and spring 2011. Questions were prepared and approved by the AAC in spring 2010 for fall 2010 focus groups. Questions were again edited for focus groups in spring 2011 after fall 2010 focus groups.

### **Focus Groups for Fall 2010:**

**Dates:** October 14, 2010 – 4 students

October 21, 2010 – 5 students

**Sample:** After much discussion pertaining to accessing students for focus groups, we decided to go through ResLife to seek volunteers. Students were CAs/RAs. Students were asked to complete a closed-ended questionnaire prior to the actual focus group for demographic purposes.

### **Focus Group Questions:**

**Closed-ended questions** for demographic information (These questions were completed by the advisees **prior to commencement** of the focus group)

1. **What year are you in** (first, second, etc.)

5 – third year students

3 – fourth year students

1 already graduated student (May 2010)

2. **What is your major? Option?**

Anthropology; Sociology

Business Management; Sales concentration

Art Education

Meteorology -3

English; Writing Option (graduated student)

Communication: Film & Media

Childhood Studies

3. **What is your minor?**

Music; Communication; Tech Mathematics; Women's Studies (graduated student); Psychology-  
Child Development

4. **Do you live on campus or do you commute to campus?**

All nine students live on campus

5. **How many credits do you need to graduate?**

120-3 students; 122-2 students (these responses came from students on 10/21) the question was interpreted differently on 10/14 to mean current exact number of credits: 12, 30, 76, not sure

6. **How many credits do you need to be considered full time?**

one student did not answer the question; one student indicated 12+; one student indicated 13; six students indicated 12

**7. Have you ever used the degree evaluation function in Banner to access your status toward your degree completion?**

4 yes; 5 no (one did not know it existed)

**8. Have you and your advisor filled out a curriculum planning guide during advising meetings?**

5 – Yes

1 – “I think so”

1 – “Sorta”

2 – No

**9. Do you think that you will graduate in four years?**

1 – Already did

2 – Hopefully

3 – No

2 – Yes

1 – Yes, barely

**Student Focus Groups Fall 2010**

**Thursday October 14, 2010 and Thursday October 21, 2010**

**The Focus Group Questions:** (Created by Ahl, Coykendall, and Holba – submitted to and revised by the AAC Spring 2010) Focus Groups conducted by Holba/Wright – **October 14, 2010** and Holba/Wright/Yeo – **October 21, 2010**

1. How do you know what classes you are supposed to take next semester?
2. What are the general education program requirements and where are you in the process of completing the general education program?
  - a. Probe: How many general education courses have you taken so far to meet that requirement?
3. How do you monitor your progress toward completing your degree?
  - a. Probe: How often do you monitor/evaluate your progress?
4. How do you know what a course is about?
5. How are your advising needs changing from your first year to your fourth or current year?
6. What is advising at PSU?

## Student Focus Groups Fall 2010 Thursday October 14, 2010

*Four students participated to this focus group session. The students were in their second year of studies or higher. For the purpose of this report, the students were coded with numbers from 1 to 4.*

*It became apparent early on that this sample represented students who were conscientious about planning their courses and academic careers. They also had very positive opinions about their advisors.*

*Pizza and soft beverages were served. The room and the atmosphere of the focus group appeared comfortable.*

**The Focus Group Questions:** (Created by Ahl, Coykendall, and Holba – submitted to and revised by the AAC Spring 2010)

1. How do you know what classes you are supposed to take next semester?

*Student 1 – “learned the hard way” – made mistakes early on and had to make a plan to get back on track. Used the Academic Catalog to plan the sequence of courses. Benefited from the recommendations of an excellent advisor, who also pointed out information in the Catalog.*

*Student 2 – changed majors and advisors as a junior. Used the Academic Catalog to plan the sequence of courses.*

*Student 3 – followed the sequence of courses from the Academic Catalog. Found information mostly on own.*

*Student 4 – asked the advisor (“that is what the advisor is for”). Fully trusts the advisor.*

2. What are the general education program requirements and where are you in the process of completing the general education program?

What are the general education program requirements:

*Student 1 – mostly agreed with information provided by other students*

*Student 2 – listed most Gen Ed requirements*

*Student 3 – added to the list provided by Student 2*

*Student 4 – nodded acknowledgement of information provided by other students*

Where are you in the process of completing the general education program:

*Student 1 – finished two semesters ago.*

*Student 2 – slightly behind. First advisor did not point out the importance of completing General Education requirements. Second advisor changed the perception that the General Education requirements were not necessary. Currently taking General Education courses as well as major courses.*

*Student 3 – behind. The course sequence from the Academic Catalog focuses on degree specific courses before some General Education requirements. Will be able to catch up, as noted in the Academic Catalog.*

*Student 4 – behind. Took many art classes early on (had a strong interest in art). Need to catch up.*

- a. Probe: How many general education courses have you taken so far to meet that requirement?

*Although no exact numbers were provided, the previous discussion indicated the students’ progress towards the completion of General Education requirements. Students 1-3 were aware which general education categories applied to their degrees.*

3. How do you monitor your progress toward completing your degree?

*Students 1-3 – cross off course from the plan/sequence in the Academic Catalog. Discuss with advisor. Students noted that the Advising Office at PSU appears more interested in the students' academic success than the faculty advisors. "Deb Tobine deserves a gold star". Reaching out to the Advising Office and the Undergraduate Studies Office play a role in successfully planning the degree.*

*Student 4 – ask and rely on the advisor.*

*Academic Coaches are helpful (student 2 is an Academic Coach).*

*Students 1-3 noted that the majority of students are more confused about which courses to take in their first and second years of studies, and become more aware in the last two-three years. Student 1 believes that the students approach to planning their degree follows a normal distribution, with most students having some knowledge within acceptable boundaries. Student 4 noted stated that "most students are like me" (i.e., trust the advisor).*

- a. Probe: How often do you monitor/evaluate your progress?

*Students 1,2 and 4 - end of every semester*

*Student 3 – only during advising weeks.*

4. How do you know what a course is about?

*Students 1 – "you don't"*

*Students 1, 2 – some General Education course descriptions or major specific course descriptions in the Academic Catalog are "self-explanatory". However, Catalog descriptions are not helpful most of the time.*

*Student 1 – the same course is different depending on the teacher. Some professors do not take their courses seriously. Information from friends helps. Use three criteria to choose a course: is it required? Does it fit in my schedule? What is the class like?*

*Students 1,3 and 4 – agreed with Student 2 on the above.*

*Further probing questions:*

5. How are your advising needs changing from the first year to the fourth or fifth year?

*Student 1 – when you follow the sequence described in the Catalog it is as if you were hard scheduled into classes*

*Student 2 – in the last year there is more focus on planning for graduate school, not on class selection*

*Student 3, 4 – agreed with the above*

*Students agreed that the focus evolves from class selection in the first years to making plans for the future in the last years.*

*Discussion:*

*Student 2 – most students complain about advising (but admits that student hears complaints because of CA role). Most students do not communicate well with their advisors.*

6. What is advising at PSU?

*Student 1- "vocal version of the Catalog", interactive catalog information*

*Student 2 – value added of interaction beyond information in the Catalog. Having someone from whom to ask question. Additional explanations of Catalog information. The advisor is a constant guide and provides assurance.*

*Students 3,4 – agreed with Student 2*

## **Student Focus Groups Fall 2010**

### **Thursday October 21, 2010**

*Five students participated to this focus group session. The students were in their second year of studies or higher. For the purpose of this report, the students were coded with numbers from 1 to 5.*

*Respondent #1 graduated in May of 2010. Respondent #3 and #5 are academic coaches.*

*As for the previous session, the sample represented students who were conscientious about planning their courses and academic careers, and had very positive opinions about their advisors. Pizza and soft beverages were served. The room and the atmosphere of the focus group appeared comfortable.*

**The Focus Group Questions:** (Created by Ahl, Coykendall, and Holba – submitted to and revised by the AAC Spring 2010)

1. How do you know what classes you are supposed to take next semester?

*Student 2 - “My advisor tells me. The books they give us are very helpful and any information that is on myplymouth is all planned out with all the classes you need to take with all the sub columns of the gen eds and other stuff. “*

*Follow-up question: Do you use the paper copy Course Catalog?*

*Student 2- Yes*

*Student 1- “The paper copy is way more user-friendly than online”*

*Student 3- “you can just flip to whatever”*

*Student 5- “you already have all of your information tagged and you can just look at anything you need”*

*Follow-up question: How are you supposed to know what you’re taking?*

*Student 1 – “You’re supposed to go to your advisor to figure out your classes but honestly I never did that. If you’re a first year student coming here, you don’t NEED to follow all the courses and you can still play around with it. By the time I graduated I knew exactly what I needed and I didn’t need my advisor at all.”*

*Student 5 - “My advisor used a transfer form with all the specific requirements I needed, he did that this year with me which helped but he never did that with me before. Same advisor as before and I’m not sure why he did this with me this year or if its commonplace but it was like a transfer to another school form that showed all the credits and classes I’ve taken so far and it helped me map out everything I needed for next year.”*

*Student 1- “When I worked in undergraduate studies there was an entire guide like that that no one ever uses.”*

*Student 3- “My academic advisor does that every year with S and F and plans out what I need.”*

*Follow-up question: Is that what you rely on?*

*Student 5- “That’s the most helpful”*

*Student 3- “That way I can know what I need to do and he can see what I need to do and it helps”*

*Student 1- “It helps plan everything out. That way you can plan out the harder courses and when you need to take courses so that you can graduate. As an incoming freshman I remember being incredibly overwhelmed and not knowing at all how to plan.”*

*Student 4 – “I felt my advisor did something similar this semester: he sat down and pulled out the curriculum guide and showed me what I needed to take and showed what gen eds I still needed to take and everything that was left over and it was nice to know. “*

*Follow-up question: Did you already have some idea of the classes you needed?*

*Student 4– “ I had a general idea of what I needed but it wasn’t that clear...”*

*Follow-up question: How can it be changed that the curriculum guide can become more available to students?*

*Student 1- “I think there’s a lot of information, not necessary in myplymouth but on other offices’ sites like finding the yearly schedule for final exams, its already out but it’s really difficult to find. Like meal plans are hard to find but curriculum guides are pretty easy to find but students don’t really know where to look for it, or how to use myplymouth. Every single year they try to pack so much into orientation that some things get left behind. And some things I want to know about.”*

*Student 5- "That's one of the things I noticed about orientations, not only with me but other ones I've seen but they focus more of their time on life skills of living here but not the academic side and they should either be equally balanced."*

*Student 1- "Orientation might not be the best place to do that either, they should show you how to access the information maybe in something like first year seminar so they can show you what's available for you. They did a myplymouth demonstration and I was probably texting, they should divide it into smaller groups and show [them]"*

*Student 3- "What about people who don't take their first year seminar until their senior year?"*

*Student 1- "The most you can do is have some effort there, so that there's at least an attempt to show the kids the information."*

*Student 3- "I came in not knowing anything, even my password and I learned everything from friends and other people"*

*Student 1- "I learned everything from friends."*

2. What are the general education program requirements and where are you in the process of completing the general education program?

*Student 5 – "Gen ed program is a program full of courses designed for all students to take all divided into sections that will teach you life skills into whatever career you chose. I am about 12 credits away from finishing all my credits. I spent this term trying to knock out some of my gen eds. I try to take online courses so that face to face time which I feel is more important I feel that I take alternative courses for geneds."*

*Probing question: Are you behind or ahead?*

*Student 5- "I think I'm pretty ahead."*

*Student 1- "I think their designed for the right reasons but I feel that a lot of them are just pointless that people just like to take because it's an easy A to boost their GPA. I don't have to be all that well rounded. Like my science class, had no science in it, and although it was great for me I didn't learn any science. In theory I think they were hoping students would be more well rounded but I think that it just makes you look at them like their pointless and that kids aren't being challenged in them and that it's flawed. "*

*Student 2- "I think its flawed for different reasons. I edit film I'm a media and communications students. These are the science courses, I'm bad at all of them. All of these gen eds suck. So, I think there need to be more options for students so that those who aren't good at one thing people can still do well. I'm still dreading the three gen eds I need to do."*

*Probing question: Do you know where you're at?*

*Student 2 – "You tell me, yeah I'm behind."*

*Probing question: How much?*

*Student 2- "I can still graduate on time but I'm going to have to haul butt to graduate on time, I'm find will all my important stuff but everything that's not creative process based I can't do its going to take me forever but sometimes even the teachers just blow."*

*Student 1- "I've had teachers who go into a class and say because they know we don't care about the class they aren't going to either. We watched youtube for five days for absolutely no point to what we were supposed to be doing. How are we supposed to care about ged eds if the teachers don't"*

*Student 2- "The only reason I got out of "self and society" classes was because they were music they should have other classes integrated in there so people would be more interested."*

*Student 1- "Do you think if there was more options for students that we would be more interested?"*

*Student 3- “ I take classes specifically so that I don’t have to go to Boyd so yes I’d be more interested. I’m almost done, and I was the only reason there was no grade and it was good.”*

*Student 4- “ I know for some geneds there are lot of options and other ones there were only about 6 or 7 options. I have to take two in one requirement and there’s only 8 total. There should be more of a balance so that some of them are expanded and there’s [sic] more options. If there were more options some of them would interest me better. I look at that category and just hope that something else pops into the category.”*

*Student 1- “ I think there is a lot to say about that. I was blessed because I had a lot of options within my major to take for geneds. Some students would love to take music classes but others just don’t want to do that. Some just want to take a painting class but they save those spots for people who actually need that for their major. It’s all so limited that it’s frustrating.”*

*Student 2- “Can I add something? I think when we do the selection process my registration date is so late that I never get to take the classes that I actually know I can take because all the options I have left are bad.”*

- a. Probe: How many general education courses have you taken so far to meet that requirement?

*<see answers above>*

3. How do you monitor your progress toward completing your degree?

*Student 2- “ With the degree evaluation function”*

*Student 4- “ I didn’t even know it exist[ed]”*

*Student 5- “ You’re the one who showed it to me...”*

*Student 4- “ Well I guess I never used it?”*

*Probing question: What do you use?*

*Student 4- “ I rely heavily on my advisor and he’ll tell me what I need to take and I look at the classes and for the most part our classes are set in stone so for the first two years you know exactly what you need to take.”*

*Student 5- “ There is very little fluctuation in the schedule for meteorology...”*

*Student 4 – “If you don’t take something’s when you’re supposed to you basically can’t take it. My advisor just steers me in the right direction all the time.”*

*Probing question: How do you monitor your progress?*

*Student 5- “ I use the degree evaluation function online all the time for a brief summary of what I need but I rely heavily on my advisor. If I don’t have it all planned out he does and we just compare plans and he reminds me of things and gets me to take gen eds and he comes through.”*

*Student 1- “From sort of an employee perspective one of the things we struggle with is getting students to become independent adults and students constantly rely on everyone else to do things for them so for the advising process I just want to say hey this is your advisor and they just need to do some work. Their students should know where they are at when they go in to their advisor. Students need to take some initiative to do things some don’t even show up. There needs to be a happy medium. One things we talk about is the international students their advisor does a lot for them the first year to help them and the same thing should happen to first year students to show them the resources so that the next year they can do it themselves. It’s just about being an adult and taking initiative.”*

*Student 3- “Some of my friends have never met their advisor. They just go to Maryanne Pertle just to help them. She’s not going to help them. “*

*Student 2- “ I had an advisor who was never there, even on office hours.”*

*Student 1- “A lot of students say that.”*

*Student 2- “ I didn’t know where I was supposed to be - now Dr. Holba does everything I need but before I just didn’t know what to do.”*

*Student 1- “ I had advisors who would give me wrong information and I’d have to track it down. I had questions on electives and they said I needed to take electives not in my major.”*

*Student 4- “Some of my residents have come to me and they didn’t know what a course catalog is, even if they’ve met with their advisor. Some didn’t know that they were even supposed to meet with their advisory. They need to set up a meeting.”*

*Student 1- “So many students just don’t check their email.”*

*Student 4- “Some advisors are great and some just don’t care and give you a sheet and say here do what you can”*

- a. Probe: How often do you monitor/evaluate your progress?

*Student 4- “At the beginning of the semester.”*

*Student 5- “Actually, I do it around this time so that I’m in the swing of things and I can get the big picture and everything is situation and I can focus on the end of the year and being all set.”*

*Student 4- “Yeah, you just saw your advisor so you know where you stand and if you’re going in the right path and that way you don’t wait too long so you know exactly what’s going on.”*

#### 4. How do you know what a course is about?

*Student 3- “ Friends.”*

*Student 1- “Not the course description.”*

*Student 4 – “The course description in the catalog is never right its sounds interesting and you read it and its just awful.”*

*Student 5- “Some of them are just way too vague.”*

*Student 4- “You read about all the things you do and then when you’re in the class and it’s completely different.”*

*Follow-up question: Are there any classes which are accurately described in the Catalog?*

*Student 5- “I think the meteorology classes are all pretty descriptive but Chem I, it’s a gen ed and I’m a science person and I was lot it was completely misrepresented in the catalog.”*

*Student 1- “Teachers also all teach the same gen ed differently the overall description could be so easy sounding but it’s not. [There are] so many different teachers teaching it that they keep it vague.”*

*Probing question: Where do you look then?*

*Student 5- “Friends.”*

*Student 2- “ I look online.”*

*Student 4- “Word of mouth.”*

*Student 2- “Whenever something is misrepresented in the book- the description was amazing and as soon as we sat down this guy was not going to teach it the way we thought and we were all going to kill ourselves it was all just misrepresented. It was awful. I think that stuff like that should be true to what it really is or that the teachers needs to teach it the way it’s expressed in the category. “*

*Student 1- “You can’t write a course description for the same class for different teachers, it just won’t work.”*

*Student 5- “Why can’t the syllabus be online so that you can view the previous syllabus and you can get a general idea and see what the class is actually doing. So many people have a class where the description is great and its way more work that you realized. Like in Chem outside of class you have to take an Exam that no one knew about.*

*Student 1- “Some[times a] syllabus makes class sound really intense and nothing was the way he said it was going to be and some professors say this and some don’t. I like to know what I’m going to do in a week but not all classes do that.”*

*Follow-up question: Any other ways that you look at classes?*

*Student 3- "I always do it through word of mouth, if I knew the teacher or a friend took the class."*

*Student 2- "rate my professor.com"*

*Student 1- "But some comments are not great- they always say the negative things. A lot of students have a bias, and, yeah, that professor is hard but I've never gotten so much information from a teacher as I did before".*

*Student 5- "Like customer surveys where the only people that fill things out who complain."*

*Student 4- "One of my teachers read some things about himself on that website and he actually took it into account. Some actually know about it [..]."*

Student 1 left.

Further probing questions:

5. How are your advising needs changing from the first year to the fourth or fifth year?

*Student 4- "As a freshman you don't have a great idea of what you're doing and as you go on you need more specific things."*

*Student 5- "You don't feel as overwhelmed as time goes on- you've already taken so many things so you've narrowed down from the 60 courses. So you only have 10 courses to choose from and it's not as overwhelming."*

*Student 2- "I'm opposite- I feel like right now I'm way more stressed out because the bulk of the hard courses are here and I've been trying to avoid them this whole time and now it's into the core scary stuff. Capstone what? I need help and I need it broken down. [..] I won't stop being stressed until I walk at graduation."*

*Student 4- "Until you need to find a job."*

*Student 2- "I won't find a job"*

*Student 3- "I forgot the question..."*

*Restating question: How do your advising needs change?*

*Student 3- "There's more stress because you want to graduate on time and winterim classes are like 1000 dollars and taking testing out of things it would have been way less stressful."*

6. What is advising at PSU?

*Student 2- "It's very rhetorical- it's what is getting me by right now, when I go to meet with my advisor everything is all planned out and all set out- this is what you did, this is what you're going to do it's all there."*

*Student 3- "It's all reassuring, it's like everything is working."*

*Student 5- "No matter how good it is, there will be plenty here with bad experiences. I won't say all of it is perfect but most of it is good. My experience has been completely wonderful however some people had bad experiences."*

*Student 2- "Like my first one who really blew."*

*Student 4- "There are some people who think they are stuck with their advisor- [but] you can just change your advisor and most people don't know that."*

*Student 3- "They feel stuck for life."*

*Student 5- "I wanted to switch advisor and he said I needed to fill out a form but I don't think that we do... [have to]."*

*Student 4- "No, you don't.."*

## Focus Groups Spring 2011

- Thursday February 3, 2011 9:30-10:45 and 12:30-1:45pm

## Focus Group February 3, 2011

### Pre-Focus Group Questions

**1. What year are you in (first, second, etc.)**

3<sup>rd</sup> (3)

2<sup>nd</sup> (3)

4<sup>th</sup> (3)

**2. What is your major? Option?**

English with lit and film option

English – teacher cert

IT (2)

English

Communication (2)

Humanities

Business administration

**3. What is your minor?**

None (4)

Theater

Business

Business administration

Communication

Coaching

**4. Do you live on campus or do you commute to campus?**

Apartment off campus

Off campus- walk

On campus (7)

**5. How many credits do you need to graduate?**

14

120

122

117 (2)

120? 160? Not sure

-

120 ?

60

**6. How many credits do you need to be considered full time?**

12 (8)

12 ?

**7. Have you ever used the degree evaluation function in Banner to access your status toward your degree completion?**

Yes (3)

Maybe once to check grades early

No (5)

**8. Have you and your advisor filled out a curriculum planning guide during advising meetings?**

Yes (6)

No (1)

With my old advisor yes, but not with my newest one

I believe so

**9. Do you think that you will graduate in four years?**

If I take winter/summer courses, yes

I might just barely make it

Yes (5)

If I overload 1 class I will

I know I will not, graduating next year

**Student Focus Groups Spring 2011**

**Thursday February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011**

*The focus group was organized during Professor's Coykendall's course EN 3090 - Technical Communication 9:30-10:45 am*

*Roxana Wright facilitated the focus group. Scott Coykendall recorded responses.*

*Nine students participated to this focus group session. The students were sophomores, juniors and seniors.*

*The students and their responses were not coded. Some answers are recorded as direct quotes from students; some information was synthesized.*

*The room and the atmosphere of the focus group appeared comfortable.*

**The Focus Group Questions:**

(Created by Ahl, Coykendall, and Holba – submitted to and revised by the AAC Spring 2010)

**1. How do you know what classes you are supposed to take next semester?**

*The degree evaluation sheets my advisor gives us (agreement)*

*Me and my advisor look online to see what I need. I'll come in with a list of classes that I should take.*

*My advisor gives us a sheet that shows what I've done and what I need to do*

**2. What are the general education program requirements and where are you in the process of completing the general education program?**

**What are the general education program requirements?**

*Do you mean exact classes like Scientific Integrity? I know you need two cultural diversity, two scientific inquiry, first year seminar, past and present, self and society, comp, math, foreign language (at least for my degree)*

*Health and wellness*

*I know the program only after four years*

**Where are you in the process of completing the general education program?**

*This is my last Gen Ed class (5 students responded the same or agreed with this statement)*

*I don't know*

*I need a science (X3)*

*I need a science, a past and present, and a creative thought course*

**a. Probe: How many general education courses have you taken so far to meet that requirement?**

< see previous answers >

3. How do you monitor your progress toward completing your degree?

*I use Degree Evaluation on my own (agreement from one)*

*I usually just use that sheet. I don't know about "degree evaluation"*

*I use the catalog and check off which ones I've done*

*Follow-up question: How many of you don't know about the Degree Evaluation tool in myPlymouth? 3 students responded affirmatively*

*Follow-up question: How many use the catalog? 5 students responded that they use the print version of the catalog*

a. Probe: How often do you monitor/evaluate your progress?

*Once a semester, when I register for classes (there was general agreement among students).*

*Most students said they do this during registration or at the end*

4. How do you know what a course is about?

*Course description in the catalog*

*And I'll ask my advisor*

*Students were split over using print and online catalog*

*Also word of mouth*

5. How are your advising needs changing from your first year to your fourth or current year?

*Really relaxed in the beginning, but it's gotten more complicated*

*I switched majors so it's completely different- I'm basically catching up so I can graduate on time*

*Student question: How many advisors advise for students who are in their major? My advisor says more about what classes I SHOULD take now that I'm through with Gen Ed*

*Now it's focusing on how my major shapes everything I take*

*I switched advisors and my new advisor is great. She prepares everything ahead of time*

*My advisor took a leave last semester. I had someone from Undergraduate Advising come in and she was the best advisor I ever heard of. She listed out all of the classes I would need to take and how those choices would affect the classes I took the next semester*

*I just like everything to be laid out for me but now it's harder because I'm at the end*

6. What is advising at PSU?

*It's just helping us to achieve our goals to graduate and achieve our degree*

*Opinion on what we should take to graduate on time*

*Giving structure and info to students to graduate on time*

*Guidance on what to take and what to take next*

*Guidance*

*Follow-up question: Do you consider something besides your advisor as "advising"? Degree evaluation (most students shook their head no)*

*Follow-up question: How about the Catalog? I think in the beginning but as you go further in it becomes more complicated than what you can put in writing. It takes some thought.*

<The facilitator (Roxana Wright) asked if students wanted to add something pertaining to advising or whether they had questions.>

*Questions and comments from students for Roxana:*

*Why couldn't the web site have a list of classes/options that tells you what you've taken and gives course descriptions for the classes you still need to take? I have 14 classes in my Group A, and I just want one page that shows me what all of those classes are.*

*In terms of scheduling, professors will post something on their door. I wish they would do it online so I could make an appointment without walking all the way over there.*

*My roommate had an advisor who wasn't in her major at all, she didn't really know what classes she should take. Why have advisors that are not in your major?*

*Follow-up question: How many of you don't know what classes you should take until you see your advisor? A couple of students raised hands, and some offered reasons: because I'm a transfer student; my advisor knows a lot better than I do; I'm an IT major, I think my advisor can help me choose which ones I should take.*

*I go into my advising meeting with my paper already filled out. But I leave with a few new choices based on advising feedback.*

*A lot of what my advisor suggests has to do with what sort of direction I want to go in*

*One of my greatest needs is not to have Friday classes, so I need help*

*Her advice is very helpful because I have had her four times as a teacher and she knows what I can do and what courses will help you with another class*

*Follow-up question: Would you say your experience is typical?*

*With my roommate, she just uses her advisor for her pin number but I have long conversations*

*My roommate doesn't really know his advisor but I've had my advisor as a professor a couple of times so she's helped me in different ways*

*Follow-up question: Do you believe that advising is a positive experience?*

*My first advisor was not a great communicator. Didn't return emails, didn't talk to me much. My advisor now is great*

*Follow-up question: Who initiates a conversation with an advisor? All but one student noted that they initiate communication. When they were Freshmen and Sophomores, most waited for advisor to initiate contact*

*<The facilitator asked for additional comments>*

*The catalog is kind of confusing. It's hard to see what is a Gen Ed. Sometimes a course doesn't show up in a different edition of the catalog.*

*I only found out about being able to change catalogs this last semester. I only heard it from Undergraduate Studies.*

*I found out this morning!*

*I've never heard of this!*

*Follow-up question: What is your main source of info? Catalog (2 students), advisor and teachers in my major, advisor and catalog (2 students), advisor (4 students), online Degree Evaluation*

*Follow-up question: Would you feel differently if I was a student asking these questions? I wouldn't take it as seriously if it was a student asking the questions.*

*Most students indicated that the answers would have been the same.*

### **Findings from Fall 2010 Focus Groups:**

The focus groups had a limited participation. Most student participants were employees of the university through resident life thought they did come from a variety of majors. The discussions appeared uninhibited, although at times students use only a few words to describe experiences and/or situations.

The results of the focus groups sessions indicate the following:

- Students are not sure how many credits are required for their degree and may rely on advisors for that information
- Word-of-mouth is considered a reliable source of information, especially when it comes to courses
- Most students know about and use advising tools such as the Curriculum Planning guides and the Degree Evaluation, if these tools were introduced to them by advisors
- Students tend to monitor their progress once a semester
- Students believe that their needs change during their time at PSU, with more career advice needed in the last year.
- Most students perceive advising as guidance, support and final "check" on their successful completion of the degree.

Among the limitations of the Fall 2011 focus groups are:

- Similarities in the student status on campus (with resident life)
- Limited representative sample (not representative)

## **Student Focus Groups Spring 2011**

**Thursday February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011**

**12:30-1:45 pm**

### **Pre- Focus Group Questions**

**1. What year are you in** (first, second, etc.)

3<sup>rd</sup> (5)

2<sup>nd</sup> (3)

4<sup>th</sup> (1)

**1. What is your major? Option?**

IT (2)

Geography, terrain analysis

Communication (3)

English writing (2)

English, no option

**2. What is your minor?**

None (7)

English writing

Psychology

**3. Do you live on campus or do you commute to campus?**

Commute

On campus (7)

Off campus, but close

**4. How many credits do you need to graduate?**

120 (2)

?

-

122

30/40 more, 120 total

120-130 ?

120-132 ?

I don't know

**5. How many credits do you need to be considered full time?**

12 (7)

?

15 per semester ?

**6. Have you ever used the degree evaluation function in Banner to access your status toward your degree completion?**

No (5)

Yes (2)

How?

Yes- recently

**7. Have you and your advisor filled out a curriculum planning guide during advising meetings?**

No (5)

Yes (3)

Not that I know of?

**8. Do you think that you will graduate in four years?**

-

Yes (5)

No (3)

### **Focus Groups: Thursday February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011**

*The focus group was organized during Professor's Coykendall's course EN 3090 - Technical Communication 12:30-1:45 pm*

*Roxana Wright facilitated the focus group. David Zehr recorded responses.*

*Nine students participated to this focus group session. The students were sophomores, juniors and seniors.*

*The students and their responses were not coded. Some answers are recorded as direct quotes from students; some information was synthesized.*

*The room and the atmosphere of the focus group appeared comfortable.*

#### **The Focus Group Questions:**

(Created by Ahl, Coykendall, and Holba – submitted to and revised by the AAC Spring 2010)

**9. How do you know what classes you are supposed to take next semester?**

*I know from the Academic Catalog or online guide*

*I also use the course catalog*

*I use the degree evaluation on myPlymouth*

*I go to the English Department website, which lists the requirements*

*I use the Curriculum Guide from the department chair*

*I use the Curriculum Guide I got at Orientation*

*3 more students noted that they also use the Catalog*

**10. What are the general education program requirements and where are you in the process of completing the general education program?**

*What are the general education program requirements?*

*I ask around- kids whom I already know already took the course, ask what the teachers are like*

*For Gen Ed I ask for recommendations from friends and advisors*

*My friends talk about what courses are difficult, especially Gen Eds*

*Don't they change by major? I just changed and got more Gen Eds*

*24-28 credits*

*Wellness, integrative, self and society*

*I just changed major so I have no idea*

*There are 4 directions*

*No matter what major I must take Comp, Math. I need 8 credits in wellness*

*I think I know- 4 connections, 2 of each, must take a lab with science, language, global  
I know what to take from the Catalog- I am trying to knock them off- I have the Catalog marked*

*Where are you in the process of completing the general education program?*

*I just transferred- I have 2 Gen Eds left*

*1-2*

*A couple*

*Most are done- not sure what's missing*

*1-2 left*

*2 left*

*Another science*

*Quite a few left*

**b. Probe: How many general education courses have you taken so far to meet that requirement?**

*< see previous answers >*

**11. How do you monitor your progress toward completing your degree?**

*I use the degree evaluation on myPlymouth*

*I do the same thing- I look at final grades for academic standing*

*Going thru myPlymouth- just saw it*

*I'm IT major- the advisor made a tree chart which makes prereqs easier to deal with*

*Undergraduate program sent me a list in my mailbox of what I needed to take*

*When I was PE, it was easier, but in the new major I'm not sure where I am. In PR they had a sheet telling what to take and when*

**a. Probe: How often do you monitor/evaluate your progress?**

*I check when I'm picking classes*

*I monitor at the end of the semester*

*When I'm picking classes during advising week (two students agreed)*

*When I get my grades to see if I need to take something over*

**12. How do you know what a course is about?**

*I read description from the catalog and ask friends*

*Other people give you more information than the catalog*

*Course catalo isn't always accurate*

*Gen Ed- different professors teach different sections- so what it's about depends*

*Most common – word of mouth*

*I ask around, ask older kids if they liked it*

**13. How are your advising needs changing from your first year to your fourth or current year?**

*I'm getting more into what to do after I graduate*

*At the beginning, I worried about what classes to take now I go to Bagley House and my advisor to talk about internships*

*1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year are Gen Eds , now I have fewer choices- I need to stick with the major- I use advisor more now to figure out what I need to take- before I just used the catalog*

*The first year – meet advisors, trust them to go with it, later- ask more specific questions- who's a better teacher, etc*

*I need more now because I changed my major*

*I used advisors a lot in the 1<sup>st</sup> year, have figured more out on my own now*

*I do more by myself now- my advisor picked my classes, but I'd rather do it myself- I just picked up a minor he didn't know about*

*I used advisor more now as I get to end – don't want to miss out on anything*

*I used a teacher because my advisor wasn't helpful- the department head is more helpful. Old advisor wouldn't meet with me to help me pick classes so I was taking unnecessary courses*

*Advisors experience varies- my first advisor wouldn't return emails- I switched so it's better*

*My advisor isn't helpful- tells us to come with classes- it's done in groups- no attention*

*I wish my advisor took more time with me- just say "good" and sends me away. But he should be able to warn me about courses that don't work for me. Advisors should be able to offer information about courses- more than what we know and beyond the catalog*

*If it's in the department/major they should know about courses*

**Follow-up question: do you take the initiative when it comes to advising?**

*I take the initiative for advising- email with questions or go in with my courses*

*I just show up with a list- are they ok? Are there other suggestions?*

*They have so many advisees- can't expect them to do everything for you.*

*Some need more help, it's good to come prepared*

*I'd like it if showed ideas I could get advice about- like advice about similar courses- round out my options more*

*My advisor still likes to pick classes for me*

*Some people I know meet with advisors just to talk*

#### **14. What is advising at PSU?**

*At orientation, already had my classes based on my major*

*Answering questions/guidance*

*Extra help if you need it*

*Solving problems and picking classes*

*Guiding you thru 4 years*

*Just picking classes*

*Knowing someone will be there with an answer*

*Available guidance for college career*

*A road map*

*Help you stay on track*

**<The facilitator (Roxana Wright) asked if students wanted to add something pertaining to advising or whether they had questions.>**

*Questions and comments from students for Roxana:*

*What if you have a bad advisor- can't you get pin number from Speare?*

*Can department chair give it to you?*

*Another teacher got mine for me*

*My advisor didn't meet with me so I went to the department chair*

*Last semester I took a meteorology course (I'm a geography major)- from 6 kids in the class, 5 failed- now I have to wait for it again- do students have any power in changing the major requirements?*

*If it's a bad advisor, why isn't there a list you can ask instead? I didn't know what to do – there should be a list of helpful people*

*How are advisors assigned?*

*The pin numbers force you to meet with your advisor*

*Pins don't limit you when you pick classes*

*I switched majors- they don't tell you what the courses in the old major could count for- they should go over this with you*

*<Dr. David Zehr and Roxana Wright answered the questions above>*

### **Findings of the February 3<sup>rd</sup> Advising Focus Groups**

The focus groups benefitted from a more varied participation than in the Fall 2010 groups. Although students were predominantly representing majors for which the respective course was required, they were in various years of study and had varied advising experiences. In contrast to when the focus groups were implemented in the Fall 2010, the participants were not a self-selected sample. The discussions appeared uninhibited, although at times students use only a few words to describe experiences and/or situations. At the end of each focus group, the facilitator asked for additional comments or questions. This seemed to have worked well. The students gave positive feedback on how the focus groups were set up and the questions that were asked. They noted that sometimes they chose to talk more about problems they considered of interest.

The students also commented that they liked the fact that the focus group was facilitated by Academic Affairs committee members who were also professors and advisors. This gave them a sense that they could “make a difference”. A few students mentioned that they would not take the questions as seriously if they were asked by another student.

The results of the focus groups sessions indicate the following:

- Students are not sure how many credits are required for their degree and may rely on advisors for that information
- Word-of-mouth is considered a reliable source of information, especially when it comes to courses
- Most students know about and use advising tools such as the Curriculum Planning guides and the Degree Evaluation, if these tools were introduced to them by advisors
- Students tend to monitor their progress once a semester
- Students believe that their needs change during their time at PSU, with more career advice needed in the last year.
- Most students perceive advising as guidance, support and final “check” on their successful completion of the degree.

The above results were consistent with results from the Fall 2010 focus groups.

New findings for these sessions might be that:

- Students who change majors need more advising support and may be more reluctant to look for help themselves
- Students find value in having a long term plan that lays out their degree requirements
- A single portal with customized information (i.e. degree evaluation on the curriculum planning sheet, rather than two separate formats) would be considered an improvement to the current tools
- Students expect that their advisor is knowledgeable about courses and majors in their discipline
- Students may not be aware of policies such as Catalog changes, the ability to change Catalog year, and the ability to change advisors

Among the limitations of the Spring 2011 focus groups are:

- Similarities in the students' degrees and advisors
- Reduced interaction among students

**Appendix A - Resolution**

**S.R. 08 (F) 5**

**Resolution** S.R. 08 (F) 5

**Introduced By:** Trustee Martin  
**Co-sponsored By:** Senator Mallinger

**Action Taken** \_\_\_\_\_

**Certified By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Stefanie Webb  
Speaker of the Senate

**Academic Advising Resolution**

**Whereas:** Student Senate realizes the importance of the relationship between academic advising and student success; and

**Whereas:** Student Senate believes that more must be done, to ensure a higher quality of academic advisors on campus; and

**Whereas:** Plymouth State University does not currently evaluate faculty members as academic advisors; and

**Whereas:** Student Senate affirms that academic advising is under the prong of teaching and should be evaluated and counted more fully in the Annual Faculty Evaluation and Promotion and Tenure Process.

**Therefore**

**Let it be**

**Resolved:** That the Academic Affairs Committee will work to create an Academic Advisor Evaluation Process, as well as expectations for the student and advisor, to be discussed and signed at their first student-advisor meeting.

**Let it be**

**Further**

**Resolved:** That the evaluations shall be conducted annually during spring advising weeks, in a similar manner as teaching evaluations.

**Let it be**

**Finally**

**Resolved:** That the Student Senate requests that the Academic Advisor Evaluation be implemented by spring 2009 and the Annual Faculty Evaluation and Promotion and Tenure Process include the Academic Advisor Evaluation Process by the beginning of the 2010 – 2011 academic year.

**Appendix B – Fall 2009 Survey**

## ANNUAL ADVISING SURVEY

Advisor Name \_\_\_\_\_ Semester/Year \_\_\_\_\_

I am in my  First Year  Sophomore Year  Junior Year  Senior Year  Fifth Year

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Please respond to the following statements by circling the appropriate number in the right hand column.

**1=Strongly Agree; 2=Agree; 3=Disagree; 4=Strongly Disagree**

	1	2	3	4	NA
My advisor is effective at helping me understand my major requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My advisor is effective at helping me understand General Education requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My advisor is effective at helping me plan my 4 year program.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My advisor is available during posted office hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My advisor responds to my requests for meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I respond to my advisor's requests for meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My advisor understood my abilities, needs, and interests and used this information when helping to coordinate my schedule planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My advisor helped me to plan for academic improvement by working with me to evaluate my strengths and weaknesses.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My advisor encouraged me to make wise decisions about my personal, academic and social life (or commitments).	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Please reply to the following questions.**

What are the three or four most important things you expect to get from your advisor?

How well does your advisor meet your expectations?

How do you prepare for your advising sessions?

Would you recommend this advisor to another student? Why or why not?