

Academic and Career Advising Committee
Annual Report

Submitted May 15, 1986

Committee members: Alice Horning (faculty), Chair, Johnetta Brazzell (ex officio), Elaine Chapman-Moore (ex officio), Liz Easterly (Congress), Larry Lilliston (faculty), Jerry Marsh (faculty), Beth Millwood (AP), Ann Pogany (faculty), Dolores Solosky (faculty), Randy Straughan (Congress), Kevin Williams (AP), (Floyd Willoughby served 9-85 to 2-86 and resigned due to other commitments in SEM).

This report provides a review of the work of this Senate standing committee during the 1985-1986 academic year. The individuals who worked on various projects during the year are identified with their achievements. Following the summary is an outline of the problems of the committee, including those we feel are problems concerning advising at Oakland generally as well as those which interfered with the committee's success. At the end of the report, we provide a list of agenda items for next year's committee to work on.

1. Achievements

The work of the committee has been ably handled by a set of subcommittees. These subcommittees and their work are described below.

1a. Subcommittee on the College-Level Exam Program (CLEP) test review: Beth Millwood (chair), and Elaine Chapman-Moore.

CLEP tests are important to advising at Oakland since an increasing number of students apply to the university with CLEP credit. Although score levels have been determined and reviewed previously, the use of the exams, particularly in light of new general education requirements was in order. In addition, committee members felt it was important to review the tests themselves rather than descriptions of them and for the review to allow adequate time for faculty to review and discuss exam content.

The exams were provided to Oakland by ETS during March, 1986. The tests were distributed to the relevant faculty members, identified beforehand, along with a questionnaire on the use of the test, to be completed. The results have been compiled into a document that will be distributed to all advisors on campus and to any other interested members of the university community. A copy of the completed report is attached as an appendix.

1b. Subcommittee on Advising Satisfaction Survey: Floyd Willoughby, chair (9/85-2-86), Larry Lilliston, chair (2/86-4/86), Dolores Solosky, Jerry Marsh, Randy Straughan, Kevin Williams, Liz Easterly.

This subcommittee reviewed the ACT Advising Survey instrument and considered some other means of measuring advising satisfaction among students at Oakland. Part of the charge to the committee from the Senate is to monitor advising functions on campus and to determine satisfaction with advising in general, a survey seemed appropriate. However, a number of difficulties arose in connection with the survey

instrument and with the means by which different units providing different kinds of services could be evaluated. Because the solution to these difficulties requires time and concerted effort, we recommend that the committee offer each unit assistance in evaluating the quality of advising service it offers. (See agenda for next year, below.)

1c. Subcommittee on Computers and Advising: Johnetta Brazzell.

Mr. William Morscheck and Mr. Jerry Rose were both invited to visit the committee to discuss the role of computers in advising.

Mr. Morscheck discussed on-line registration with us, reporting that the system would be ready for first use in Spring, 1986. He also discussed the on-line student records system, a subject of considerable concern to advisors. He expects that by Fall, 1986, advisors will be able to see a student's schedule of classes, status and class standing, prior term registration, holds and approvals for certain courses and departmental approvals. The system is still incomplete and will remain so for some time to come.

Mr. Rose discussed the problems with ACT test data, which the university is requiring of applicants for admission beginning Fall, 1987. ACT data is received in paper copy now, and is virtually useless to us. Mr. Rose would like the university to receive data on computer tape, but the present on-line records system does not have capability to handle it. It is Mr. Rose's understanding that the on-line system will not be able to handle ACT data for several years, at the very soonest.

See problem section below for further discussion.

1d. Subcommittee on Advising and Registration: Alice Horning (chair), Elaine Chapman-Moore, Jerry Marsh, Johnetta Brazzell, Randy Straughen.

This subcommittee has been looking into advising for students in connection with registration generally, and working on ways to improve advising for undecided students, as mandated by the CUE report.

After meetings with Shelly Appleton, David Beardslee and Jerry Rose by Alice Horning, the subcommittee redrafted the back page of the admission form to include an Undecided-No Major Preference category and curriculum code. Mr. Rose has agreed that new applications will be printed including this new category, to allow students to identify themselves as undecided so that they can be more easily identified for additional advising assistance.

The subcommittee would also like to see a first-year career planning/decision making course be studied for possible implementation at the university.

2. Problem areas

2a. Advising problems on campus in general.

Development of the on-line records system has not been occurring in accordance with promised milestone points. The result has been significant frustration among advisers and a credibility gap between the system, its developers and the university community. We urge better communication by the developers with the university community, especially concerning time lines, procedures and problems in the system.

Current ACT data management represents a second significant problem area for advising, which the committee explored at length with

Jerry Rose. Current ACT data management is inefficient, insufficient, inadequate and unrealistic. It predates the digital computer. Since ACT scores are required for admission and are essential to academic and career advising, it is beyond our understanding why this data cannot be brought on-line immediately.

A third area is the unmet needs of undecided students. The CUE report provides a clear mandate for the university to identify and serve these students more effectively. Our proposed revisions of the admission form move in this direction as do some of our plans for next year.

When advisors gather to discuss their efforts to serve the needs of students, whether it be in committee meetings or at other times, they note an on-going need for more staff. This need comes from virtually every advising office on campus, although some areas have more pressing and constant needs than others. The committee will address ways of documenting the need for more staff and ways of providing better services to students next year.

Finally, the committee recognizes that valuable services provided by the Placement and Career Services office are underpublicized and underused by students. We urge that greater efforts be made to inform the university community of the services available.

2b. Problems within the committee.

The chief problems the committee experienced internally have to be with membership and attendance. The membership of the committee has been unstable for several reasons. First, student membership turns over at mid-year following Congress elections. Our students report that Congress has considered a change in committee assignment procedures, and will make no changes at this time. Second, faculty members have changed because of other commitments and related problems. Finally, attendance at meetings has been erratic, even though our meeting schedule was established early in the year and our meeting times have been acceptable to all concerned.

3. Agenda for next year.

Assist advising units to measure satisfaction with advising in individual units. In particular, the committee should research all available instruments to measure advising effectiveness, and make a catalog of these instruments available to advisers and advising offices.

Research, develop and put into operation a course for career planning and decision-making, for students, to serve the undecided population more effectively. In addition, the committee should explore other services for this group.

Provide any assistance possible to move the on-line records system closer to reality.

Improve publicity for Career Day and other Placement and Career Services activities.

Document the need for more advisors in all advising offices on campus and explore ways to provide more advising services to students.

Review goals and objectives established during 1984-85, particularly with regard to the feasibility of monitoring advising

satisfaction on campus.

4. Summary

Despite the difficulties outlined above, the committee has worked well together and accomplished a number of specific goals this year. The completion of the CLEP exam review will enable advisers to counsel students about using CLEP credits. Although a survey of advising satisfaction was not carried out, we have explored a number of ways of helping advisers evaluate the success of current programs and want to assist individual units in such measurement. It is far better to have realized why a survey would be ineffective than to have invested time and money into findings that would not improve advising on campus. The committee is most dissatisfied with current computer support for advising and would suggest that OU make better use of outside software resources to meet university needs more efficiently. Finally, there are a number of issues outlined here requiring our attention next year and the committee should be able to begin work in these areas in September.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice S. Horning
Alice S. Horning, Chair
for the Committee