

MEMORANDUM

June 28, 1979

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TO: George T. Matthews
Vice Provost

FROM: Ann Pogany, ^{ap}Chair
Senate Academic Career and Advising Committee

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC CAREER AND ADVISING COMMITTEE REPORT, 1978-79

O/h

Provost

One of the first tasks of the Committee this year was to send out a letter to Chief Advisors expressing its regret at not having been able to provide them with computerized data on students and their status regarding program plans. Though there are legitimate reasons for this delay (the new computer, etc.), it has made the monitoring function of the new advising system by the Committee most difficult. Needless to say it has made the work of the academic advisors more difficult than originally anticipated. In order to get some feel for how well the system is working, we have continued the interviews with Chief Advisors. Since the winter of 1978 the Committee has interviewed eleven Chief Advisors. Attached is a list of questions which were more or less adhered to in the interviews. Jean Colburn has written a brief summary of each interview which is available in her office. These interviews have proven to be invaluable not only to the Committee but also to the Undergraduate Advising Office. We have not only been able to gather sample program plan forms, handouts, etc. used by the various departments, but it has also given the new director of Undergraduate Advising and the new Committee members an opportunity to meet with Chief Advisors, to gain an understanding of advising problems and to discuss mutual concerns and ideas. It has also given the Committee some insight into the success of the advising system.

To attempt to apprise academic advisors of the many changes that take place every year with new catalogs and requirements, the Committee urged Ms. Colburn to send out an advising newsletter. The first such newsletter was well received and more are planned for the future. The Committee feels that such a publication can prove to be a very useful communication tool and asks academic advisors and others who are interested to give the Undergraduate Advising Office suggestions about what types of information they would like to see included.

In December 1978 the Committee sent out a lengthy questionnaire (attached) to all Chief Advisors. Of the 34 questionnaires sent out 19 were completed and returned. Shelley Appleton's Office tabulated the results for us. The questionnaires and the results are available in the Undergraduate Advising Office. This survey can provide much insight and information about the problems of advising at Oakland University and possible solutions.

When the Committee learned that Professor Appleton had been appointed to study advising at Oakland University, it invited him to join the Committee on two occasions for an exchange of information and to minimize the possibility of duplication of effort. This exchange proved beneficial both to the Committee and to Professor Appleton. Professor Appleton's report of his findings should be made available to the Committee as soon as possible in order that it be able to use the information in their future efforts.

Recommendations (Thoughts, etc.) for Future Activities

Certainly the major goal of the Committee ought to be the monitoring of the program plan advising system instituted by the Senate until it has sufficient data, which at this time it does not, to be convinced that this is the best advising system for Oakland University. In addition, the Committee should give

Careful consideration to the outcome of the survey of Chief Advisors and the interviews. This Committee could unfortunately not do that this year for lack of time.

Without a computerized audit it is difficult to make an initial assessment of the new advising system. From the interviews and the questionnaires, however, it seems that the idea of program plans is generally held to be a workable one. The age-old problems of record-keeping, getting up-to-date information on students' files, and in some cases student and/or faculty disinterest remain. Many of these problems can be solved by computer applications. The Committee might well investigate computer-assisted advising, models of which are available. It ought also to direct considerable effort to establishing policies for coordinating the various academic advising activities of the University. Promotion of more and better communication between advisors and between advisors and the Advising Office should also be pursued. An advising conference such as the Committee held in 1976-77 might be just one means for achieving this goal.

The Committee might also direct some effort to gain student support for advising. The best advising system in the world will not work if students do not utilize it. The University Congress might be involved in helping to make students aware of advising and their right to it. At the same time the Committee should as soon as possible search for ways of upgrading the quality of advising at Oakland University.

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Enclosures

cc: M. Chapa, J. Colburn, D. Jaymes, M. Pierson, B. Sands, R. Kevern,
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