

ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY #S06-191

Policy on Undergraduate Academic Advising

(formerly Academic Senate Policy #S95-191)

Overview

The need for high quality academic advising is acknowledged by students, faculty, staff, and administrators alike to be a key component to student success and progress to degree. Recent reports by the CSU Chancellors Office and CSU Academic Senate identify advising as fundamental to the mission of the CSU. This revision to Academic Senate Policy #S95-191 serves to reaffirm the commitment of the San Francisco State University academic community to high quality academic advising, and in a newly added Section V specifies five implementation activities and strategies that correspond to each of the five key pivotal points of advising enumerated in Section III.

I. Philosophy

Academic advising is inextricably linked with student learning. In partnership, classroom instruction and academic advising assist students in weaving together the strands of personal and intellectual learning which are the marks of a true higher education. Through skillful academic advising students are guided toward the timely completion of their studies as well as the identification and fulfillment of academic and career goals.

II. Advising Program Objectives

The purpose of advising at San Francisco State University is to facilitate the intellectual and personal development of our students, to enhance their academic performance, and to ensure students' progress toward graduation by assisting them in achieving the following objectives:

A. Facilitating Intellectual and Personal Development

1. Choosing, clarifying, planning and achieving educational and career goals;
2. Understanding the relationship between academic experience and career opportunities/objectives;
3. Identifying academic skills that need to be acquired or enhanced to achieve educational goals.

B. Enhancing Academic Performance

1. Developing a strategy to monitor progress and development at the University;

2. Selecting courses to integrate educational and personal goals with the objectives of the University (to educate a skillful, ethical, principled, and liberally-educated citizenry);
3. Exploring academic options to make meaningful short and long-term decisions (e.g. course substitutions, Segment III clusters, options within a major, electives);
4. Increasing awareness of the full range of campus programs and services (e.g. Career Day, EOP, pre-professional advising).

C. Ensuring Progress Toward Graduation

1. Understanding and following the University's policies and procedures leading to graduation (e.g. requirements for completion of general education, majors and programs, and other University requirements);
2. Completing and processing appropriate forms and petitions necessary to maintain ongoing academic progress (e.g. graduation applications, petitions for withdrawal, waiver of college regulations, academic probation, independent study, grade changes, incompletes, etc.);
3. Accessing information and guidance regarding post-baccalaureate studies (e.g. graduate, law, or medical school).

III. Pivotal Points for Advising

Academic advising does not take place in a vacuum; rather, it occurs within a framework of a student's academic progress. Ideally, students would seek and obtain academic advising on a regular basis throughout their academic careers. Minimally, advising revolves around the following five key pivotal points: (1) when the student enters the university, either as a first-year or transfer student, (2) when the student enters the major, minor, or program, (3) if and when the student experiences academic difficulty, including probation and possibility of disqualification, (4) when the student moves into upper division standing and closer to graduation and (5) as the student prepares to graduate and move beyond his or her studies at San Francisco State University.

It is within the scope of these five pivotal points that the SFSU Policy on Advising is founded. What follows are specific responsibilities of students, faculty, departments and administrators to ensure that students and the university community alike maximize the benefits of the SFSU academic advising programs.

IV. Responsibilities

- A. Students are responsible for the following:
1. Knowing and completing all degree requirements.
 2. Consulting a SFSU Bulletin once upon entering the University and a Class Schedule every semester. Obtaining department or major brochures, handbooks, and information as necessary.
 3. Attending a new student orientation program prior to the first semester of attendance.

4. Declaring a major in a timely manner. It is recommended that students who enter SFSU as freshmen declare a major by no later than the end of the sophomore year and those students who enter as junior transfers declare a major by the end of the second semester in attendance.
5. Maintaining a personal academic advising folder and taking it to every advising appointment. It is recommended that this folder include:
 - a. Grade reports or unofficial copies of prior college/university transcripts;
 - b. Evaluations of transfer credit (Advanced Standing Evaluations/ASE);
 - c. DARS, G.E. and Graduation check lists;
 - d. Semester grade reports; and
 - e. Tentative schedules and other forms and notes from formal advising sessions (e.g. Incomplete Grade Form, Probation Release, Course Withdrawal Form, etc.).
6. Seeking academic advising at the appropriate time. Minimally, to include:
 - a. When entering the university, either as a first-year or transfer student;
 - b. When entering the major, minor, or program;
 - c. If and when experiencing academic difficulty, including probation and possibility of disqualification;
 - d. When moving into upper division standing and closer to graduation, and;
 - e. When preparing to graduate and move beyond studies at San Francisco State University.
7. Seeking academic advising from the appropriate sources:
 - a. Declared majors will receive their primary academic advising from their major department;
 - b. Undeclared students will receive their primary academic advising from the Advising Center or a specifically assigned Academic Support Program (e.g. Educational Opportunity Program);
 - c. Students with declared majors who are also in special academic support programs (e.g. EOP) will maintain regular contact with (1) the advisor in the appropriate support program and (2) the faculty advisor in their major.
8. Evaluating academic advising programs and individual academic advisors through established procedures or by speaking or writing directly to faculty advisors, chairs of departments, Deans of Colleges, or supervisors of campus advising units.

- B. Faculty Advisors are responsible for the following:
1. Being prepared after the first semester of employment to advise students:
 - a. Attend an advising orientation or in-service training as provided by department/program or university services;
 - b. Obtain and become familiar with the SFSU Bulletin, "Gator Aid" Student Handbook and current Department advising materials;
 - c. Become skilled in using electronic advising tools (e.g. DARS, Roadmaps, Graduation Planners, the Advising Center website);
 - d. Become familiar with University advising materials and procedures (e.g. ASE, Class Schedule);
 - e. Be familiar with campus advising resources as listed in the Bulletin under "University Resources and Support Services".
 2. Providing accessible advising services to students by scheduling and maintaining regular office hours.
 3. Providing supportive academic advising assistance by responding to the differing needs of SFSU's diverse student population. Advisors should be trained to 1) recognize problems that affect the academic performance of students, either personal, social or economic, and 2) to refer students to appropriate campus support services (e.g. Counseling and Psychological Services, Advising Center, EOP, Financial Aid, Testing Center, etc.).
- C. Each Department or Program is responsible for the following:
1. Preparing and implementing a written plan for advising students in their majors. The plan should include the following elements:
 - a. A clear delineation of who in the department is responsible for academic advising (e.g. Department Chair, Advising Coordinator, GE Advising Coordinator, Probation Advising Coordinator, etc.), including the designation of liaisons with important Campus Advising Resources (e.g. Advising Center, EOP, Disability Programs and Resource Center, Financial Aid, etc.);
 - b. Identification of mechanisms which ensure the accessibility of advising (e.g. faculty office hours which accommodate a variety of student schedules; periodic department orientations, peer advising program, written advising materials, etc.);
 - c. A method by which faculty advisors will be selected (including lecturer faculty, per College procedures), assigned, and trained to provide academic advising;
 - d. Materials which will be used in the advising process, including an orientation-to-the major brochure or handbook, a prerequisite-to-the major flow chart, a semester-by-semester graduation plan for native and transfer students (including GE and major requirements) and a graduation progress checklist;

- e. An information program for the major/minor (e.g. Advising Day major/minor overview; new majors/orientation meeting);
 - f. A written plan requiring students on academic probation/subject to disqualification to meet with a major advisor as a requisite for on-going registration;
 - g. A procedure to evaluate the effectiveness of departmental advising, including recognition of advisors.
2. Making specific requirements of their academic program readily available to students by having a designated area on department bulletin board for public display of advising procedures and information. Departments are encouraged to develop electronic means for disseminating advising information to students and faculty.
 3. Providing a list of faculty advisors, their office hours, where they are located and the type of advising provided.
- D. The Advising Center is responsible for the following:
1. Providing direct advising services to students in the following ways:
 - a. Be the primary advising department for Undeclared, Special Major, and Re-entry students;
 - b. Provide services to the above student populations who experience academic difficulty or are subject to disqualification;
 - c. Coordinate orientation programs for new students and SFSU all-university advising programs and events;
 - d. Provide general advising information workshops, drop-in quick questions, and advising appointments by referral (GE and general graduation requirements) for the general student population;
 - e. Coordinate special advising programs as necessary (e.g. CEEL, Special Major, GE petition process).
 2. Providing the following advising support services to University staff, faculty and departments:
 - a. Gather and disseminate appropriate academic advising materials to assist college, department, and program advising coordinators; once a semester, call a meeting of all advising coordinators;
 - b. Act as a referral service and respond to questions from the college, department, and program advising coordinators, as well as from faculty and students;
 - c. Be familiar with campus-wide advising problems and formulate and make suggestions for the improvement of the advising program;
 - d. Play an integral role in preparing, reviewing and updating advising related all-university publications (e.g. SFSU Bulletin, Student Handbook, Class Schedule, etc.);

- e. Provide academic advising orientation for newly appointed faculty and in-service training and development for faculty and advising coordinators.
 - f. Coordinate and train student peer advisors and graduate student interns to offer the University an alternative advising service during peak advising times (e.g. Orientation of New Students, first week of classes, etc.).
- E. Student Support Programs and Services will be responsible for the following:
- 1. Academic support programs established to respond to specific student populations (e.g. EOP, ILP, MEP, OIP, college resource centers, etc.) shall embrace the general philosophy and objectives of the Policy on Academic Advising. Students participating in these programs will receive the following support to facilitate their effective academic and social integration into the University.
 - a. Orientation to the University, with developmental programs as necessary (e.g. EOP 5-week Summer Bridge Program);
 - b. Comprehensive academic planning support leading to successful entry and/or continued success in major programs and progress toward graduation;
 - c. Through effective programming and referral, link students to campus resources (e.g. Career Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, Financial Aid, Testing Center, Disability Programs and Resource Center, etc.);
 - d. Mandatory programs requiring students on academic probation or subject to disqualification to meet with an advisor as a requisite for on-going registration.
 - 2. Career-oriented advising will be the primary responsibility of the Career Center and an ancillary responsibility of departmental advisors and the Advising Center;
 - 3. Personal development counseling will be the primary responsibility of Counseling and Psychological Services; academic advisors will refer students to these services as necessary.
- F. Advising will be supported by University Administration as follows:
- 1. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. In conjunction with the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Academic Senate, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and College Deans identifying ways to provide resources, incentives and recognition necessary for an effective and efficient advisement system;
 - b. Ensuring that academic advising of students is fully recognized, duly supported, and periodically evaluated.

2. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies shall provide the following:
 - a. Leadership in the area of all-university advising endeavors by working closely with advising-related committees and programs (e.g. General Education Council, Liberal Studies Council, Board of Appeals and Review, College Advising Coordinators, etc.) to ensure coordination and effectiveness of University advising;
 - b. Periodic and thorough reviews of academic advising culminating in a report to the Academic Senate.
3. College Deans shall implement, coordinate and provide oversight of departmental and program advising activities in their unit.

V. Implementation Activities and Strategies

At a minimum, students should receive assistance and advice at each of the five key pivotal points outlined in Section III above. The following five implementation activities and strategies help to ensure that students will attain such assistance and advice at each of the respective five key pivotal points:

- A. *When the student enters the university:* All newly admitted students should attend and register for courses at a new student orientation.
- B. *When the student enters the major:* The “Request for Change of Undergraduate Major/Minor or Addition of Secondary Major or Minor” form will be revised to include a notation that academic advising took place as part of the process for declaring a major/minor.
- C. *If and when the student experiences academic difficulty:* All students on academic probation or subject to disqualification are required to seek advising before being allowed to register for the following semester. If allowed to continue, undergraduate students on academic probation may register for no more than 13 semester units.
- D. *When the student moves into upper division standing and closer to graduation:* Students must create and have approved by an advisor a graduation plan no later than the semester after they have achieved 70 semester units, or they will lose their registration priority.
- E. *As the student prepares to graduate and move beyond his or her studies at San Francisco State University:* A student who has earned 120 or more semester units must have a degree completion plan approved by an advisor before being allowed to register for the following semester. A revised plan will need to be approved by an advisor each semester to ensure that the student is making adequate progress to the degree.

*****Revisions Approved by the Academic Senate at its meeting on April 18th, 2006*****