

ACADEMIC ADVISING ASSESSMENT PLAN, revised Sept. 30, 2008

MISSION STATEMENT

Academic Advising at Wells College supports the College's mission to educate students to think critically, reason wisely, and act humanely, to appreciate complexity and difference, to embrace new ways of knowing, and to be creative and ethical. Academic Advising at Wells College supports students in making: a successful transition to becoming a Wells College student, wise educational choices within the framework of academic requirements, and good use of the life and study skills assistance available on campus. Wells College academic advisors assist students in understanding themselves and their academic choices in a larger world context, provide students with accurate information about their academic program and campus support services as well as about off-campus opportunities for experiential learning (e.g., internships, study abroad, service), and guide students in thinking about their lives after graduation.

GOAL 1: Students will transition successfully to becoming a Wells College student.

OBJECTIVE 1.1. All new Wells students will be formally introduced and exposed to the particular and unique experiences of the Wells College academic and student life environment.

OUTCOME MEASURE 1.1.1. Verify that all students participate in a version of Wells 111 (First Year Experience) suitable to their status as a First Year or Transfer student and Residential or Commuter student.

OUTCOME MEASURE 1.1.2. ASA will review WLLS 111 survey outcomes provided by the Associate Dean of the College and Dean of Students to see where we might be able to assist in improving on those outcomes.

OBJECTIVE 1.2. Advisors will ensure that advisees are familiar with The Globe and the Wells College Catalog and know how to use these as information resources.

OUTCOME MEASURE 1.2.1. Percent of students registering on-line using the Globe.

OUTCOME MEASURE 1.2.2. Students will successfully obtain their own course schedule and degree audit as needed, and know where their major/minor requirements are to be found in the Catalog along with relevant course descriptions. This will be assessed via additional questions on the ACT survey.

GOAL 2: Academic advisors will have the resources and support available to them to achieve excellence in their role as advisors.

OBJECTIVE 2.1. Academic Advisors will have the opportunity to participate in Advising training and to receive timely updates or reminders of critical advising information and deadlines.

OUTCOME MEASURE 2.1.1. At least one advisor development program will be offered per semester. New faculty will be offered an initial training, either as a group or individually.

OUTCOME MEASURE 2.1.2. Timely e-mail reminders of upcoming advising-related deadlines or of policy or procedure will be delivered to academic advisors as necessary, either by the Chair of ASA, the Dean of Academic Advising, or the Registrar, as is appropriate.

OBJECTIVE 2.2. An Academic Advising web site will be maintained as a support resource for advisors. This site will contain information that is pertinent and relevant for academic advisors to achieve excellence in academic advising.

OUTCOME MEASURE 2.2.1. The Academic Advising web site will be visited for maintenance and updates at least once a year or more frequently as needed. This role will fall to the Dean of Academic Advising with assistance from the members of ASA whose job it will be to monitor and make suggestions for necessary changes, improvements, etc. ASA will specifically address the web site in its meetings once a year as a mechanism for polling members for such suggestions. Advisor input will also be sought.

OUTCOME MEASURE 2.2.2. Contemporary research and literature on academic advising will be made available to advisors on library reserve and/or through links on the web site or an e-mailed reading list.

GOAL 3: Academic Advising will be mindfully and deliberately linked to other support services on campus and will be informed by institutional research findings.

OBJECTIVE 3.1. The advising plan will mesh with other support systems and services available from the Student Life Division (e.g., residence life interventions, student-athlete support, involvement opportunities, etc.) and Academic Affairs (e.g. learning support services, study skills workshops, writing center, etc) as outlined in the Enrollment Management Plan.

OUTCOME MEASURE 3.1.1. At least once a year, the Registrar will report to ASA on up-to-date retention data (e.g., Freshman-to-Sophomore retention rate, graduation rate) and findings that may be useful for improving academic advising. ASA (including the DOS) will discuss ways in which this data may be used to jointly improve advising services and support for students.

OUTCOME MEASURE 3.1.2 A collaborative meeting of academic advisors and Student Life support staff (e.g., Residence Life Director, athletic coaches, Coordinator of Learning Support Services, etc.) to share information and experiences, get to know one another, and brainstorm on ways of coordinating support services will be conducted at least once a year.

OUTCOME MEASURE 3.1.3. First probation letters will require students to meet with their academic advisor and will also refer them to the appropriate student support

services. In addition to this, second probation letters will require students to meet with the Coordinator of Learning Support Services.

GOAL 4: Students will take a wide range of courses that will both foster their development as students and enable them to graduate in a timely manner.

OBJECTIVE 4.1: Students will fulfill academic requirements within four years.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.1.1. Compliance rate of faculty submitting mid-term grades. Advisors using mid-term warning grades and other feedback from faculty to intervene with students at academic risk as assessed via ACT survey.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.1.2: Select questions from ACT survey and/or add questions to ACT survey, making sure that students indicate how many conversations they have had regarding selecting courses and fulfilling requirements. Survey faculty with similar questions.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.1.3. Monitor four-year graduation rates and assess whether we remain at our current high level; review DOS exit interview findings to ascertain problem points that ASA might be qualified to address.

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Students will take classes from a variety of disciplines in order to broaden their scope and perspective, in keeping with the spirit of a liberal arts education.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.2.1. The Registrar will track instances of students in excess of 45 semester hours in one discipline and report to ASA on 'habitual' offenders. ASA will provide an intervention to the academic advisor when this happens.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.2.2. The Registrar will track instances of failure to meet General Education requirements in a timely manner (i.e., by the four-year graduation date) and report to ASA. This generally includes students who march in commencement under the 'Degree Expected' category.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.2.3. ASA will remind academic advisors at the beginning of the school year and prior to advising week of critical advising points such as the 45-semester hour rule.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.2.4: Students will take courses that enable them to appreciate complexity and difference, as defined in the Community Standards Statement and in the Strategic Plan for Diversity. The Registrar will provide a list of courses that specifically address diversity to assist students and advisors in making such choices.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.2.5. Add specific question to ACT survey about how many conversations have you had re choosing a course that emphasizes diversity and difference. Survey faculty with similar question

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.2.6. Track NSSE responses on relevant questions.

OBJECTIVE 4.3. Students will have regular meetings with their academic advisor to discuss both prescriptive and developmental issues. [Advisors will understand the difference between prescriptive and developmental advising and will provide both types of advising with their advisees.]

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.3.1. Each student will meet at least once a semester with their academic advisor during Advising Week and advisors will encourage their advisees to meet with them at least one additional time each semester.

OUTCOME MEASURE 4.3.2. The type and frequency of advising will be measured via the ACT survey.

GOAL 5: Students will connect academic work in a larger world context and to their future life and career.

OBJECTIVE 5.1: Students will participate in experiential learning that is related to their major coursework.

OUTCOME MEASURE 5.1.1. A question on the ACT survey will ask students if at least one of their experiential learning fulfillments was related to their major.

OBJECTIVE 5.2. Advisors will converse with their advisees about career and life goals and how their academic work relates to these.

OUTCOME MEASURE 5.2.1. Select questions from ACT survey and/or add questions to ACT survey, making sure that students indicate how many conversations they have had re how academic work relates to future life and career. Survey faculty with similar questions.

GOAL 6: As part of learning to think critically and reason wisely, students will have conversations with advisors about what their strengths are as a student, how to capitalize on those strengths but also expand their own boundaries, and how to address weaknesses.

OBJECTIVE 6.1: Students will be able to evaluate what their personal strengths are.

OUTCOME MEASURE 6.1.1. Add question to the ACT survey about how many conversations advisees have had about their personal strengths with advisors. Survey faculty with similar question.

OUTCOME MEASURE 6.1.2. Track instances in which major GPA falls below total cumulative GPA to see if students are majoring in an area in which they are equal to or stronger than their general college success.

OBJECTIVE 6.2. Academic advisors will be provided with tools for assessing student strengths via the Advising web site.

OUTCOME MEASURE 6.2.1. Advisors and Advisees will be surveyed to ascertain how many actually used the strengths tools available.

OBJECTIVE 6.3: Students will be able to identify resources to support their difficulties

OUTCOME MEASURES 6.3.1. Select questions from ACT survey and/or add questions to ACT survey to make sure there are relevant questions on:

IF APPLICABLE how many conversations have you had, re: low mid-semester or final grades and how to be more successful in the future, and

IF APPLICABLE how many conversations have you had, re: good mid-semester or final grades and how to continue being successful in the future, and identifying difficulties and resources to support students.

OUTCOME MEASURE 6.3.2. Track whether students on probation or with multiple low grades use the “learning center.”

OUTCOME MEASURE 6.3.3. Include question on end-of-the-semester advisor survey to discover how many times advisors referred students to such services.

USE OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The following are some of the ways in which ASA intends to use the assessment information it collects:

- Offer Academic Advisor Interventions: either through advising development trainings, information bulletins, or one-on-one discussions. The nature and focus of these ‘interventions’ will depend on the findings of particular Outcome Measures.
- Develop Academic Advising Tools: advising web site, resource materials, conference announcements, etc.
- Dean of Students Office: Continue to work closely with the Dean of Students Office on ways in which academic and student life services can inform and assist one another.
- Registrar: Use information collected to improve use of the Globe as a tool for both students and advisors.
- WLLS 111: If a student does not complete Wells 111, determine the reasons for failing to do so and ‘close the gap’ so that all students are assured of having the opportunity to take such a course, including and especially local commuter students. Wells 111 survey data will be used to suggest areas of improvement in the Wells 111 course.

ASA will meet at the beginning of each academic year, when the new committee first convenes, to review and discuss our assessment plan, to update it as necessary, and to determine a goal to focus on for the coming academic year.