

## College of Arts and Sciences Course Success Group Results: Fall 2016

Groups who participated:

Communication Studies- Student Learning Outcomes: Kevin O'Leary, Steve Doubledee, Tracy Routsong, and Grace Hildenbrand

English- Advising: Danny Wade, Geoff Way, Louise Krug, and Erin Chamberlain

English, Creative Writing- Advising: Tom Averill, Mary Sheldon, Liz Derrington and Dennis Etzel

English- Open Access Materials: Dennis Etzel, Kara Kendall-Morwick, Geoff Way, and Bradley Siebert

English- Open Access Materials: Liz Derrington, Karen Barron, Israel Wasserstein, and Melanie Burdick

History- Student Success: Kerry Wynn, Kelly Erby, and Rachel Goossen

Math- Student Success: Beth McNamee, Angela Crumer, Stephanie Herbster, and Sonja Hoglund

Psychology- Advising: RaLynn Schmalzried, Cindy Wooldridge, Cindy Turk, Angela Duncan, Mike Russell, and Linzi Gibson

## **CN 101: Introduction to Human Communication – Student Learning Outcomes**

**Participants: Kevin O’Leary, Tracy Routsong, Steve Doubledee, Grace Hildenbrand**

We affirmed the current departmental SLOs for CN 101, which are:

- Identify primary components of the human communication process
- Recognize major issues, concepts, and theories in the study of communication
- Reflect upon communication behavior and enhance potential for improved communication
- Describe the purposes of communication in the twenty-first century

We struggled with:

- What should we assess and what tools should we use to assess?
- How many departmental SLO’s should we formally assess?
- Do traditional assessments work for an active or flipped classroom?
- Likewise, do assessments designed for an active or flipped classroom work for more traditional F2F settings and online environments?
- Should we have multiple assessments for a given SLO where an instructor chooses which assessment type he or she felt most appropriate for the SLO?

We settled upon:

- Prominent theories and concepts in communication studies should be presented in all CN 101 classes and returned to and amplified in successive major courses
  - Theories to be taught in CN 101: (1) relational dialectics theory, (2) Tuckman’s stage model of groups, (3) image restoration theory, (4) McLuhan’s media ecology
  - Concepts to be taught in CN 101: (1) identity, (2) perception, (3) listening, (4) language, (5) nonverbal, (6) self-disclosure, (7) social roles and rules, (8) culture
- Ten questions, as opposed to five, are the acceptable minimum for assessment purposes where assessment takes the form of questions/exam/quiz
- A uniform rubric should be used for writing assignments/papers that are designed to assess one of the four core SLOs

We created/drafted:

- Ten question assessment, which isn’t beholden to any one textbook, for SLO #1
- Rubric for writing assignments designed at assessing SLO #3 and SLO #4

Where we go from here:

- Update CN 101’s master syllabus
- Gather materials on the required concepts/theories for adjuncts, etc.
- Craft an assessment designed at SLO #2 (issues, concepts, theories)

## Advising Success English Department Group

**Participants:** Erin Chamberlain, Louise Krug, Danny Wade, and Geoff Way.

### **October 12: Meeting # 1**

During the first meeting, group members began by sharing and discussing their thoughts about advising. Through this discussion, members shared several positives and challenges they faced with advising. Some of the positives included interacting and developing relationships with the students, providing academic assistance, and helping students set academic and career goals. Newer faculty expressed the challenge of not knowing all of the “ins” and “outs” of advising, leading to the fear of misadvising. Veteran faculty expressed the amount of stress they feel during the advising season due to large numbers of advisees. Throughout the conversation, group members also shared several ideas and advising tips.

Following this, group members reviewed and reflected upon Jennifer Bloom’s article, “Appreciative Advising Phases,” provided by Dr. Bruce Mactavish. Group members felt the article was helpful and would continue to implement some of the ideas during the upcoming advising season.

After discussion of the article, group members determined tasks for the next meeting. Group members were asked to 1.) Interview another English instructor from an outside institution, 2.) Bring an article or artifact to share and discuss. Finally, group members determined interview questions to be asked during the interviews.

### **November 11: Meeting # 2**

To begin the second meeting, group members discussed their interview responses. Interviewees were from University of South Carolina Beaufort, St. Joseph’s College, and Emporia State.

#### **Important Findings**

- At these institutions, advising in the English department is done by the faculty and is mandatory.
- The interviewees expressed that they received very little training about how to successfully advise.
- Majority of interviewees felt that a **departmental** advising guide or tip sheet should be created and distributed to new faculty.
- Only three faculty advise in the English department at Emporia State. The number of advisees is very high. For example, the English Education advisor has 75 advisees. Reassigned time is provided to these faculty members.
- To help with the stress of advising, one interviewee shared his process of group advising. He has his advisees sign up in groups of 5. The groups can be a mix of classifications. He conducts the advising sessions in the computer lab. To begin the meeting, the advisor shares general information. Then, the advisor meets with each advisee. Following this, the advisee signs up for his/her courses on a computer in the lab. The advisor then reviews the course schedule of each advisee before he or she leaves. These sessions last about one hour. Prior to this, the advisor was spending about 30 minutes for each student. This process did cut down the amount of time spent advising.
- Freshmen at Emporia State are not advised in the departments. They do not get a departmental advisor until their second year. Freshmen are advised and provided much programming through the student success office.

## Articles/Artifacts

Following the interview sharing, group members discussed their articles or artifacts they discovered. One group member discussed advising tips and documents received at a WU general advising training. Another group member shared some advising visual aids as models of some that the English department might consider developing. One group member discussed an article, "Developmental Academic Advising: What Students Want?," by Roger Winston and Janet A. Sandor. The article presents two approaches to advising: 1.) Prescriptive and 2.) Developmental. The authors explain their research with both approaches and suggest that the Developmental approach is preferred by students as they wish to be "considered partners in the advising process." Below is a chart distinguishing the two approaches.

<b>Prescriptive</b>	<b>Developmental</b>
Focuses on limitations	Focuses on potentialities
Problem oriented	Growth oriented
Based on authority and giving advice	Based on equal and shared problem-solving
Advisor has primary responsibility	Advisor and student share responsibility
Student is seen as lazy	Student is seen as wanting to learn
Student requires close supervision	Student is capable of self-direction
Evaluation is done by advisor	Evaluation is shared process
Advisor takes initiative	Either student or advisor takes initiative
Relationship is based on status	Relationship is based on trust and respect

The last group member shared an article, "Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Academic Advising," by M. Suvedi, R.P. Ghimire, and K.F. Millenbah. This research study conducted at Michigan State University examines and reports on the perceptions students have of advising. Some important points from the article include:

- Freshmen were more positive about academic advising than seniors.
- White students perceived academic advising more positively than non-whites.
- Male students rated academic advising lower than female students.
- Colleges need to make extra efforts to encourage students to join study abroad and volunteering programs.
- In-state students felt more positive toward all advising services.
- Advising services offered by colleges to freshmen and out-of-state/international students become crucial for their smooth transition to college life.
- College management needs to explore ways to promote volunteerism.
- Colleges should explore further to understand why males, non-white students, and seniors were less positive toward advising.
- Advisors should be interested in and committed to understanding their advisees' needs and be prepared to advise students accordingly.

## **December 12: Meeting # 3**

During this meeting, group members review and revised a survey to be administered to English faculty advisors. The survey was developed based on the information and ideas shared and discussed at the previous meetings. The goal is to learn how better to support faculty advisors and to begin the first steps in putting together a guide/tip sheet for the department. See survey below. After the survey data is collected, group members will meet to go over the data and begin developing a departmental tip sheet.

Washburn English Department Advising Survey

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1. How many students do you advise each semester?
2. What emphases do you advise?
3. How many students in each emphasis do you advise?
4. On average, how many of your students participate in advising sessions?
5. For those who do not attend, do you know why?
6. What do you find beneficial from your advising sessions? What are Washburn's strengths in providing advising resources for faculty and students?
7. What do you find challenging from your advising sessions? What are Washburn's challenges in providing advising resources for faculty and students?
8. What would you like to see changed in the advising process?
9. When you first began advising, was your understanding of the system clear? What do you think we could do to help new advisors? Are there specific tips you would offer?
10. What are some of the things you wish you had known when you started (perhaps related to curriculum, students, or another part of the process)?
11. How do you think the students perceive their advising sessions?
12. What do you discuss besides course scheduling in your advising sessions (extracurricular activities, events, etc.)? Do you follow up with students after the session is complete?

## **Course Success Group: English Advising**

**Creative Writing Advisors: Mr. Tom Averill, Chair; Ms. Liz Derrington; Mr. Dennis Etzel; Dr. Mary Sheldon**

Most of us would agree that “academic advising is at the core . . . of student success” (Shockley-Zalabak, 2012, 13). After having researched effective advising methods, this Course Success Group in English Advising hypothesizes that professional holistic faculty [PHF] advising for all English majors would best meet Washburn University and English Department goals for advising. We recommend a trial/experiment in which one Writing Emphasis faculty member would advise all Writing Emphasis English majors for one year to evaluate the merits of using PHF advisors.

### **THE PROFESSIONAL, HOLISTIC FACULTY ADVISOR**

The PHF advisor would follow the Developmental Advising Model which uses advising as a “teaching and mentorship tool to help students set and achieve academic and professional benchmarks” (Anderson, Motto, & Bourdeaux, 2014, 29). Under our adaptation of this model, the PHF advisor would provide professional advising, provide holistic advising, develop and use the One-stop Advising Handbook, and actively engage in communication with students.

#### **Provide Professional Advising**

The PHF advisor would be formally trained in advising and conversant in recent scholarship on advising.

#### **Provide Holistic Advising**

Assisting students to select and schedule courses is the primary activity of faculty advisors at present. While a PHF advisor would continue in this role, journal articles emphasize that many students prefer more essential assistance in planning their education in relation to their careers, so we foresee that a PHF advisor will meet with students more than once a semester for PHF advising.

Based on research of Washburn University’s course offerings, the PHF advisor would suggest corollary courses outside the department which would help each Writing Emphasis student explore interest areas and prepare for a future career. The PHF advisor also would suggest possible minors, emphases, and programs that could benefit each student’s career.

Using the One-Stop Advising Handbook (see below), the PHF advisor would assist each Writing Emphasis student in taking advantage of the many opportunities a Washburn education offers by reviewing opportunities of interest with each advisee.

#### **Develop and Use the One-Stop Advising Handbook**

The PHF advisor would assemble and keep up-to-date an online One-Stop Advising Handbook which would open with a mission statement that defines successful advising from both the advisor’s and

student's perspective. Having a common understanding of advising helps both parties meet in a productive way (Anderson, Motto, Bourdeaux, 2014, 28).

The One-Stop Advising Handbook would include essential information that would allow the Washburn student to take advantage of the many opportunities a Washburn University education offers.

Requirements and links would be provided for each of these programs:

- Apeiron
- Double Majors
- Emphasis Areas
- The Honors Program
- The Leadership Program
- Minors
- Study Abroad
- Work Study
- WTE

The handbook also would contain information of interest to the English major with a writing emphasis, in particular. Such information would include opportunities in the following areas:

- Conferences
- Correlative Courses
- Graduate Schools
- Grants
- Internships
- Publications
- Work Places

### **Engage in Active Communication**

The PHF advisor would develop knowledge of each advisee's story (Newman, 2016). By engaging in active communication, the PHF advisor would motivate Writing Emphasis students to seek out advising and engage in an ongoing developmental process. To this end, the PHF advisor would communicate regularly with her or his advisees through email, Facebook, and any other medium currently in favor with students.

### **Generate Suggestions**

The PHF advisor would recommend improvements in advising to the University, College of Arts and Sciences, and the English Department. For instance, this advisor would immediately recommend that the University include that semester's advising dates on each Academic Calendar so students would plan for advising early.

## **BENEFITS TO THE UNIVERSITY, THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, AND THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

The goal of PHF advising is threefold:

- To increase retention,
- To increase progress toward timely graduation, and
- To assist student efforts to take advantage of options which will aid in career development.

The literature tells us that Freshmen and Sophomores, especially, need and appreciate more comprehensive advising than Juniors and Seniors. However, we believe that PHF advising would benefit students at every level. As Bloom, Hutson, and Ye argued, effective advisors will “challenge the student to proactively raise the student’s internal bar of self-expectations” (2008).

### **PRESENT ADVISING LIMITATIONS**

English Department advisors at Washburn and other universities understand the shortfalls of current advising practices.

#### **Washburn University**

Due to time restrictions affecting research on and for advising and the length of advising appointments, advisors presently tend to follow a prescriptive model in which they focus on assisting students with selecting and scheduling courses (Anderson, Motto, & Bourdeaux, 2014, 29). The level of assistance could be expanded in significant ways.

Each English Department advisor now advises from eight to twelve students each semester. The English Department’s administrative assistant notifies each advisor of the students (name and WIN) he or she will be advising, and the advisor contacts the students through email to set up appointments. Where the initial contact is not successful, a second and third attempt at email contact with students is made. Attempts are not always successful.

Besides issues with contacting students, advising now often occurs in a hurried fashion at a time when students and faculty alike tend to be “burnt-out” and “buried” under work. Both parties understand that they only have a short time to plan out a new semester’s schedule, and that they will next meet under similar circumstances in the following semester.

A student also may be assigned an advisor in an emphasis different from her or his emphasis, so the advisor’s ability to make appropriate recommendations can be severely hampered by lack of knowledge. (For instance, an instructor in the Literature Emphasis may be advising Writing Emphasis students, who make up the majority of English majors.) Moreover, due to sabbaticals, retirements, and other situations, an advisor may be shifted from one area to another in any given year. As a result, an advisor’s knowledge of a new area and her or his advisees is often limited.



## **Other Area Universities**

In many area universities, there is a recognition of the need for PHF advising, but long-standing traditions and the complexity of advising has made a successful model difficult to establish. While the advisors tend to be trained at most area universities, they still are frustrated by a variety of problems. At the University of Kansas, students need to seek out a number of advisors for advising in their majors and for special programs. According to Amy Schmidt, a KU academic advisor, the advising program “is overwhelming, especially to new students.” Academic advising outside of the department and the use of multiple advisors when special programs and/or certifications are involved cause non-completion of programs and delays in graduation. At Emporia State University, the Student Advising Center advises for the first two years, and then trained, departmental faculty advisors take over. Dr. Kevin Rabas, head of the English Department, expressed his frustration with this split-plan as well. Like Ms. Schmidt, he finds advisors at the Student Advising Center have inefficient knowledge of requirements in the English major, and students have a hard time creating four-year plans that allow them to graduate on time and benefit their career goals. Once students move to departmental advising, it is too late to enter many optional programs of benefit at Emporia State while still graduating on time. Ms. Schmidt and Dr. Rabas argue that ideally students should have one PHF advisor in their area until they graduate. Advisors at other area institutions echo these sentiments.

## **TRIAL/EXPERIMENT**

Suggestions for the logistics of the trial/experiment in PHF advising, its funding, and its assessment are outlined below.

### **Logistics**

In the 2017-18 academic year, one Writing Emphasis faculty member would be assigned as a PHF for all English majors with a Writing Emphasis for one year. We are fortunate to have a faculty member who could enter into the position with professional experience developed from a position in the Registrar’s Office.

One course now demands 45 contact hours per student. We suggest that every 25 advisees would be considered a one-course load. The PHF advisor would meet each advisee for one hour, twice a semester. The first meeting would occur during the first three weeks for the purpose of reviewing the academic calendar and discussing overall educational goals and opportunities. The second meeting would occur later in the semester for the purpose of discussing registration for the next semester(s) and continuing the earlier discussion on overall educational goals and opportunities.

### **Funding**

Funding needed for adjunct positions would come from one of these areas: the Dean’s office or the Vice President for Academic Affairs’ Office (C-TEL Grant, Curriculum Development Grant, Faculty Development Grant, or Research Grant), or an outside grant.

## Assessment

Assessment tools would be drawn up and follow appropriate methodology. Assessment would include data from Writing Emphasis English majors; such as, retention rates, course of study progress, levels of participation in Washburn University programs, and special efforts for career preparation. Assessment tools would also include comments from the PHF advisor and surveys of Writing Emphasis English majors, Literature and English Education English majors, and other faculty advisors. Surveys of Writing Emphasis English majors would measure their satisfaction with PHF advising and how PHF advising has benefited their academic plan and career goals.

Academic advising could be a form of instruction that could guarantee the most appropriate four-year instructional program for a student. Let's move forward with an experiment in PHF advising that ultimately could benefit all English majors, the English Department, the College of Arts and Sciences, and Washburn University.

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## English- Open Access Course Success Group

**Participants:** Kara Kendall-Morwick, Geoff Way, Bradley Seibert, and Dennis Etzel Jr. (facilitator)

### **What materials did you find that you would adopt for your courses?**

**Steve Poulter's Framework for Academic Writing** <http://spoulter6.wixsite.com/frameworks>

A professor's downloadable book which teaches "writing as a process" and includes worksheets, lists, etc. Includes Persuasive Writing, Business and Professional Writing, Critical Analysis, and Personal Writing. This could be a wonderful source for lit classes, Freshman Comp, and business/technical writing.

**The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill** <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>

Provides links to descriptions of ways to write, grammatical and editing concerns, specific assignments, and writing in different fields. Very helpful. A professor might want to add more to complex ideas, like argumentative writing (adding Toulmin?), but could be a primary source for teaching.

**Writing @ CSU Open-Access Textbooks** <http://writing.colostate.edu/textbooks/>

Most are PDF textbooks that can be downloaded by chapter or in their entirety, which is helpful. Allows for customization. I don't know that any single book would be perfect, but you could definitely pick and choose different chapters to shape your class. Provides link to Writing Commons as well.

**Writing Commons** <http://writingcommons.org/>

Content covers all stages of writing process; lots of content to choose from to create a "textbook" for a class, writing for different contexts/disciplines (public speaking, academic writing, creative writing, business writing, STEM). However, it is in blog form, so links would need to be to specific short blogs. Might be a wonderful supplement.

### **Parlor Press textbooks**

<http://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/SearchResults.aspx?subjectAreald=6>

Textbooks available as free .pdf downloads or can be read on screen. However, only a few that relate to composition classes: only two seem appropriate for EN101 and two seem useable by EN300 students, but maybe only the upper 50 percentile – it's pretty advanced.

**Paradigm Online Writing Assistant** <http://www.powa.org/>

Tool with resources focused on specifics of writing, though doesn't offer answers for questions posed in different sections

### **Could they substitute for materials students must currently buy?**

YES. Definitely. I can also see how I would be able to find whatever I would want to include somewhere on the websites—increasing as more institutes add to open access materials.

### **How do you change your course to accommodate any shifts away from textbooks?**

Add references to EXACT website links versus page numbers.

**English Department Course Success Group: Exploring open access alternatives to textbooks**  
**Members: Liz Derrington, Israel Wasserstein, Karen Barron, Melanie Burdick**

**Session 1: Discussion of current course materials.** The group brought materials and discussed past and currently used materials. We were in agreement on the following points:

- Textbooks for composition classes are the most problematic for the English department since students *can* often find inexpensive options for literature and creative writing courses. Composition textbooks include the following: a rhetoric, a grammar and mechanics handbook, and a reader.
- Several of us have begun to use the Purdue On-line Writing Lab (OWL) instead of having students purchase a handbook.
- All of us bring in materials outside the textbook such as pertinent readings, etc., so it wouldn't feel uncomfortable veering from a textbook. In other words, we do not depend upon a textbook for our curriculum.
- We have found many types of textbooks that work for Freshman Composition, but it is more difficult to find something that will work with Advanced Composition – making this a good starting point for open access materials.
- We are all very concerned about the rising costs of textbooks.
- Other concerns we have regarding the choice in textbooks versus open access materials: barriers and access issues; quality of materials; copyright issues.
- Finally, we all agreed that reading changes when on-line, and we are concerned about the ways students are able to interact with texts when they are digitally rendered. We wonder if it would be feasible to increase printing limits for students to print more of their open access materials for class.

**Session 2: Explore Open Access/Print on demand options.** In exploring this, we consulted with Amanda Luke, Mabee Open Access Librarian for potential materials.

- Amanda Luke sent us links to different possibilities before our meeting. Our meeting consisted of a discussion of these materials, actually looking through the materials on laptops, and asking questions of Amanda.
  - We each found materials that looked like possibilities for Freshman Composition. We were still a little uncertain about materials for Advanced Composition.
  - Amanda also helped us to identify the legitimacy of particular resources.

**Session 3: Implementation/Recommendations.** We believe there are adequate materials available for a composition course, especially freshman composition, to move to open access materials. This could be done over time, however, using OWL and readings, but still asking students to purchase a rhetoric textbook, for example.

On-line Textbooks that look useful:

- Writing Spaces Volume 1
- Writing Spaces Volume 2
- Involved: Writing for College, Writing for Your Self

Other Open Access Resources:

- The Electric Typewriter – tetw.org
- The New Yorker
- Purdue OWL
- The Great Jones Street Press
- Narrative Magazine
- Other on-line literary magazines

## History Department Course Success Group-

**Participants: Kelly Erby, Rachel Goossen, Kerry Wynn**

It is a critical moment for the U.S. history survey course, as our major national professional organization engages in the “History Tuning Project,” an effort to “articulate the disciplinary core of historical study and to define what a student should understand and be able to do at the completion of a history degree program.”<sup>1</sup> The points below reflect our recording of the aspects of our discussion that are helpful in ensuring course success by providing an *enriched* experience for students. We would welcome the establishment of course sections for academically talented and motivated students through Honors sections of our survey courses, but many of these techniques can be used in current courses.

Techniques to encourage critical thinking:

- *Model* critical thinking tools – provide them with a style or tool to assess sources, walk them through the process of making an argument
  - Include many types of sources, including non-textual primary sources, material objects, architecture, advertisements, etc.
- Give students more responsibility,
  - Producing their own questions for research
  - Locating sources on their own
  - [the above relate to the History Tuning Project mandate to “Generate significant, open-ended questions about the past and devise research strategies to answer them”]
  - Leading discussion
- Connect student projects to a larger goal or audience
  - Consider having students create a project for use in secondary classrooms or to be publicly available
    - Digital platforms might be helpful here
  - Emphasize the contemporary political, social, cultural relevance of history
  - Could be connected to internships or HICEPS
- Focus on questions
  - The course can be inquiry-driven [perhaps making use of ideas about “uncoverage”]
  - How do sources produce a question? How do they encourage us to think historically?
  - Focus on answering “big” questions using primary sources (“doing history”)
- Make the contemporary relevance of the course clear
  - Give student sources that conflict with one another (or fake news) and ask them to come up with a narrative they can corroborate
    - Engages current discussion about the nature of facts
  - History Tuning project – one of the new History Discipline core is to “practice historical empathy” – seeking to offer students a range of historical perspectives
    - Empathy is a term often de-emphasized in more generic discussions of critical thinking, but is key to understanding diverse perspectives and reasoning through an argument
  - In the debate between “coverage” and “skills,” do not abandon or devalue content—this is what allows us to actually address empathy and historical questions

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline>.

## **Math Course Success Group- Student Success**

**Participants: Beth McNamee, Stephanie Herbster, Angela Crumer, and Sonja Hoglund**

### **Meeting Summary**

In our first meeting, we discussed the issues faced in our basic math courses. It was our goal to identify common issues to research this semester and hopefully find some paths to solutions. Generally, the biggest issue in student success in basic math courses is student motivation. All team members shared similar experiences of unmotivated students in basic math courses, whether it was basic, intermediate or college algebra. The lack of motivation leads to poor attendance, poor participation, and insufficient assignment completion. With this issue identified, we decided to focus our independent research on identifying the actual effects of low motivation levels on student success, as measured by the student's final grade.

In the second meeting, we had each compiled grades from our basic math courses for several years. We identified trends and patterns between homework completion, attendance, and final course grade. As expected, homework completion was positively related to attendance and both were positively related to final course grade. With these relationships known, we decided to focus our next bit of independent research on finding solutions to low motivation levels.

In our third and final meeting, we each brought information regarding the issue of low motivation and success in basic courses. We found that this issue is a common problem among basic and introductory level college courses. Many articles suggest focusing on improving student attendance and participation as a way to boost motivation. The group agreed that some suggestions, such as increasing the amount of participation points or using mostly group activities, were not feasible for our population, subject matter and class sizes. We cannot consider a student successful in algebra based mostly on attendance. The subject matter insists on attaining objective knowledge and skills. Without meeting these objective standards, a student should not be considered successful in the class, regardless of attendance. Furthermore, while group members agreed with the benefits of group activities, with class sizes exceeding 30, it is not usually possible to conduct effective group activities in 50 or 75 minutes. Although we were not able to incorporate a few of the suggestions, we did find many ideas that could positively impact the motivation levels in our classroom. For example, one article suggested taking a major effort to learn student names within the first week. Knowing the students by name adds to the personal connection in the classroom and increases a feeling of responsibility in the student. Other articles suggested in class activities, such as assignments and quizzes, which could not be made up outside of class. These activities would encourage students to attend class regularly, which would likely increase learning and motivation. A final suggestion discussed in our group was the shift in the level and style of teaching when students enter college for the first time. Since basic math courses are mostly populated with entering freshman, it is imperative to consider the effects of their high school learning experience. High school teachers are focusing on individualizing instruction and developing rapport with the students. When these students enter the less personal environment of college, they lose much of their motivation. This concept confirms many of the applications we found. Learning student names and increasing the amount of group activities seeks to increase the individual connections in the classroom. All in all, the more students feel connected in their classes, the more responsibility they will take for their learning.

“The most valuable and important time commitment in a course was the time actually spent in the classroom. The hour or two spent in class each day (for a particular course) does the most to improve the student’s grade.” – Survey of the impact of attendance on student classroom success by Robert M. Schmidt (“Who Maximizes What? A Study in Student Time Allocation”, AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW, May, 1983, pp. 23-28) <http://www.mnsu.edu/cetl/teachingresources/articles/classattendance.html>  
As instructors, it must be our goal to increase the individual connection in the classroom and encourage students to take more responsibility for their education. When students feel more like part of the group, and a valuable part of class (“not just a number”), they are more apt to attend and work harder and more diligently to attain goals/objectives set for them. In addition, we suggest the following changes by the university: more 5 day College Algebra sections and smaller classes to give more individualized attention.

## **Data Analysis**

### Descriptive Statistics

49.7% pass rate of McNamee and Herbster, with all students included.

70.2% pass rate of McNamee and Herbster, with QF and W students removed.

(We did not include Crumer and Hogle statistics since they are online and Basic Algebra respectively).

This data suggests that for those students who attend class, the success rate in introductory math classes is significant.

### Method

For these analyses, we measured attendance and homework as predictors for student success. Each student was given an attendance score of 0, 1, or 2. An attendance score of 0 was given if the student did not ever attend the class or withdrew from the course. An attendance score of 1 was given if the student completed the class but attended less than 70% of the classes. An attendance score of 2 was given if the student attended 70% or more of the time. Each student was given a homework score of 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4, each corresponding to a grade of F, D, C, B, or A, respectively, on the homework portion of their grade. Homework grades did not include exams or participation. Lastly, to measure student success, we used the final grade in the class. While success can be subjectively measured in many ways, success in a course is widely determined by the final letter grade.

### Omnibus Analysis

When considered alone, attendance and homework are significant predictors of student grades,  $F(1,710)=55.16, p<0.001$  and  $F(1,710)=19.98, p<0.001$ , respectively. Together, attendance and homework do not significantly predict student grades,  $p>0.05$ . This interaction is likely insignificant due to multicollinearity between the two predictors. Homework is significantly correlated with attendance,  $r=0.698, p<0.001$ . Because of this issue, we should look at the individual effects of homework and attendance on student grades.

### Marginal Analyses

Individually, attendance and homework both have a significant effect on student grades. A student’s grade is significantly correlated with attendance,  $r=0.681, p<0.001$ . Furthermore, attendance significantly accounts for about 46% for the variability in student grades,  $F(1,710)=613.98, p<0.001$ . A

student's grade is also significantly correlated with the amount of homework they complete,  $r=0.761$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Homework completion significantly accounts for about 58% of the variability in student grades,  $F(1,710)=972.9$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

### Conclusion

These analyses confirm the patterns found in the classroom. Students who do not attend class struggle to succeed. Additionally, students who may attend class but do not complete homework assignments also struggle to succeed in the course (see Graph 1). In order to improve student success, it is imperative to improve student attendance and participation (measured by homework completion).

*Figure 1 Graph of the relationship between student success and attendance and homework.*





## Psychology Course Success Group: Advising

**Coordinated by: RaLynn Schmalzried**

**Other group members: Linzi Gibson, Cindy Wooldridge, Cindy Turk, Mike Russell, Angela Duncan**

### **Report:**

The psychology faculty were able to identify multiple issues regarding our advising process and want to try to improve advising across the department through an advising initiative. This had been discussed at last year's department retreat and led by Cindy Wooldridge and RaLynn Schmalzried. We divided the problems into six themes and divided them into coming up with ideas for solutions for each. Below you can see a brief report of what we have decided to implement for each and a few other ideas

#### **1. Student Preparation for Advising Sessions (i.e. what info do they need to bring, how/when do they get training and reiterations of it)**

- Cindy Turk developed some verbiage to put on the Website about our advising. This can also be posted to D2L and informs the student of how they should use their advisor and with some basic student information. There is also a quiz that she designed that advisors could use to ask students to complete before they come in, put it on D2L again, incorporate into 299, and any combination of the above to allow students to check their familiarity with some of the advising information.
- Linzi Gibson found some evidence for reflective writing prompts that could be put in PY299 (I'll add some next semester and see how it goes) that puts the responsibility on the student to consider how to tackle advising problems or issues.

#### **2. Advisor Preparation for Advising Sessions (i.e. Advisor training, FAQs, documentation needs, our tracking sheets, what to include in advising sessions)**

- Cindy Wooldridge is putting together checklists for our advising folders/packets for advisors to have a shared list of information we need to provide with students at every advising meeting to keep advising similar throughout the department. These are similar to the documents she and I shared at the retreat as part of the advising initiative.
- RaLynn will be putting together a FAQs sheet to be put on the shared drive as a place we can all add to and reference for advising problems.
- RaLynn will put together and solicit questions for a faculty advising quiz to see how much we know and where we differ in our understanding of the process.

#### **3. Role of Advisors (models of advising vary across the department, Role of advisors at different points in student's career, How differ for transfer students, how long advising sessions should be to have active advising role, etc.)**

- Mike Russell talked some about the possibility of intrusive advising, where we could use MLAs to email, call students who miss PY100. While they aren't all majors, it's just to check in early and often with them. At other universities, this has had a HUGE increase in retention.
- Mike Russell also provided talk of the idea of prescribed advising, where we had a specific course sequence for majors who are struggling academically to help set students up for success that we will continue to consider. Maybe having a different advisor for these students in the same way we have a specific advisor for pre-law students.

#### **4. Mechanics of Advising @ WU (assigning advisors, scheduling appointments, documentation of advising sessions, following up on transcripts, financial aid plans, other courses/programs at WU that use our classes or students utilize etc.)**

- We changed the way we made advising appointments this year, removing the responsibility

from our administrative assistant, and having the messages come from the advisor. Some advisors used YouCanBookMe website, others used Office Calendar, and others did a Doodle as we had done in the past. The administrative assistant was then able to help with getting folders and PIN numbers to us because she wasn't flooded with all emails about advising appointments and we had better success since students were hearing directly from their advisor.

- We continue to consider options for assigning advisors and having better communication of programs that our students utilize.

**5. In-between Advising Sessions (what information are advisors privy to, what happens when they don't follow our advice, drop courses, etc.**

- We would like to see more university-wide communication that involves advisees. For instance, an early alert warning system to allow faculty to indicate early on that the student is absent or showing difficulty in classes and instead of just involving Student Success, to also include advisors on this list as another place students can get contact.
- We love the new advising software for the What-Ifs and user-friendly notes to keep track of students in-between advising sessions!

**6. Other (sometimes challenging) Advising situations (summer advising, late enrollees, no-shows, and especially transfer students)**

- Angela Duncan specifically looked at transfer students and found a few contributions:
  - Conduct a needs assessment of current transfer students to determine what the department could offer to transfer students to ease their transition to Washburn. This would also determine if needs are different between community college and four-year institution transfers.
  - Transfer mentor program: Have existing psychology transfer students mentor incoming psychology transfer students on what they had done to adjust socially and academically. This could be supervised by the faculty transfer student liaison (see next point).
  - Transfer mentor program: Identify a psychology faculty member to be designated as the psychology transfer student liaison. This person would be assigned transfer students as advisees and would follow-up with transfer students to answer questions and assess level of acclimation.
  - Hold a departmental reception for psychology transfer students.
  - Keeping seats open in "gateway" courses, like PY 231, for transfer students to enroll.