

## Advising Policy

*Effective Fall 2011*

Because advising is critical to students' educational success in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, we embrace the following principles and strategies to promote good advising in our programs and departments.

Advising is an educational interaction between students (advisees) and faculty members (advisors) in which both have responsibilities to one another. As a School, our community agrees on the following list of responsibilities for the two partners in this relationship:

*The responsibilities of faculty advisors are:*

1. To help students plan their programs of study;
2. To listen to students' academic concerns and needs;
3. To be available to students and to take an active interest in their welfare;
4. To refer students to appropriate resources elsewhere on the campus or beyond for guidance on academic and career matters;
5. To help students make informed choices, negotiate difficulties, and take ownership of their education by learning from the consequences of their actions and choices.

*The responsibilities of students (advisees) are:*

1. To develop a program plan with liberal arts breadth and depth that may change over time as they discover new interests and passions but still leads to graduation in a timely manner;
2. To participate actively in planning their education, setting and meeting goals;
3. To prepare for advising appointments as instructed by their faculty advisors;
4. To develop resourcefulness by seeking, identifying and appropriately using resources, beyond their faculty advisor, for guidance on academic and career matters; and
5. To develop self-ownership of their education by learning to make fully informed choices and take responsibility for their decisions.

### I. Models of Advising

**Developmental Advising** focuses on student exploration of life and career goals, program choice, and course scheduling in which students are taught to proactively maximize the benefits of their education by taking ownership or "self-authorship" so that they can make decisions for themselves and evaluate their own progress toward meeting their goals. In the School of Humanities and Social Sciences this is the model of advising to which we

aspire *for all students as soon as they demonstrate readiness* to take self-ownership of their advising process.

By contrast, **Prescriptive Advising** characterizes an advising situation in which advisors react to student needs related to course and major choices, without engaging in a conversation about longer-term goals. The focus here is on “progress through the degree program.” In the School of Humanities and Social Sciences we begin with advising of this kind *for all entering freshmen and some sophomores and transfer students*.

Lastly, **Proactive Advising** focuses on work with students in a context of academic difficulties of one kind or another, including, but not limited to students in transition between majors and students on probation. In the School of Humanities and Social Sciences we use this model in working *with students with these special challenges and for some Special-Admit students*.

## II. Student Responsibilities

As noted above, Students will

1. Develop a program plan with liberal arts breadth and depth that may change over time as they discover new interests and passions but still leads to graduation in a timely manner;
2. Participate actively in planning their education, setting and meeting goals;
3. Prepare for advising appointments as instructed by their faculty advisors;
4. Develop resourcefulness by seeking, identifying and appropriately using resources, beyond their faculty advisor, for guidance on academic and career matters; and
5. Develop self-ownership of their education by learning to make fully informed choices and take responsibility for their decisions.

In accordance with these 5 responsibilities, students will take ownership of their own educational program: this includes preparing for advising sessions in accordance with their advisor’s expectations and instructions. Students take responsibility for understanding the policies and academic requirements of the School and of their major and run academic requirement and other reports on PAWS as needed to remain informed about their progress toward degree completion. Students will be aware of college policies and requirements as explained in the TCNJ Undergraduate Bulletin ([www.tcnj.edu/~bulletin](http://www.tcnj.edu/~bulletin)), including the policy on Academic Integrity. Students will respond promptly to communication from faculty advisors and from degree audit officers from Records & Registration in order to ensure progress toward degree completion.

Students will use their @tcnj.edu e-mail account to communicate with their advisors. Advisors are not required to respond to e-mail messages from non-TCNJ.edu accounts because they cannot confirm the identity of the individual sending such communication. Students are required to check their @tcnj.edu e-mail regularly for all official communication not only from their advisor(s), but also from the College.

Students whose major does not offer a multi-year orientation course are encouraged to take HSS 201 in the spring of their sophomore, junior, or senior year. This is a one-credit, pass-fail course focused on post-graduate planning.

Students with a GPA at 2.2 or lower will have an advising hold placed on their course registration process; they will not be able to register for courses for the next semester until they meet with an advisor. First-time external transfer students will also have an advising hold preventing them from registering for courses until they see an advisor.

Students in the EOF Program will meet with their EOF advisors regularly.

Students with differing abilities will register with the Office of Differing Abilities and provide their faculty members copies of ODA documentation at the beginning of the semester. Faculty members will provide accommodations as recommended by the ODA effective only from the date at which documentation was provided. Faculty members are not required to provide retroactive accommodations. For more information, see <http://differingabilities.pages.tcnj.edu>.

All HSS students should visit the Career Center early in their academic program, preferably during their freshman year, to consider career options so that they can choose academic programs and courses with their career goals and opportunities in mind.

All HSS students are encouraged to participate in Study Abroad. To that end, we recommend that all our students visit the TCNJ Center for Global Engagement to learn about opportunities for study abroad they can discuss with their faculty advisors.

### **III. Faculty Advisor Responsibilities**

As noted above, Faculty Advisors will:

1. Help students plan their programs of study;
2. Listen to students' academic concerns and needs;
3. Be available to students and take an active interest in their welfare;
4. Refer students to appropriate resources elsewhere on campus or beyond for guidance on academic and career matters;
5. Help students make informed choices, negotiate difficulties, and take ownership of their education by learning from the consequences of their actions and choices.

Recognizing the importance of advising in the academic and professional development of our students, as well as the diversity of advising needs among our students, faculty members will be familiar with all advising resources and tools, including program requirements, patterns of course availability, and PAWS. Faculty members will work with their department's faculty advising liaison and with the Assistant Dean on these matters.

Every semester, Records & Registration places advising holds on registration for all HSS students with a GPA of 2.2 or lower and on first-time external transfers (students

transferring into an HSS major from outside The College of New Jersey). Faculty advisors will lift advising holds preventing registration when students have met their advising obligations (i.e., coming fully prepared to the meeting with their faculty advisor to review course selections). PAWS does not allow faculty advisors to lift other kinds of registration holds (e.g., from student financial services or health-related).

Faculty advisors will be in periodic contact with their EOF advisees' EOF advisors.

Faculty advisors will liaise with the Office of Differing Abilities with regard to students registered with that office. For more information, see <http://differingabilities.pages.tcnj.edu>.

Faculty members will work in departmental or program units to develop a departmental or program advising syllabus for use throughout a student's four-year advising career. Departments and programs may adopt the advising syllabus provided in the appendix to this policy.

#### **IV. Faculty Advising Liaison Responsibilities**

Faculty advising liaisons will work with the Assistant Dean and with faculty members in their respective departments and programs to ensure the efficient flow of information, including questions and answers, to support advising in the department or program.

#### **V. Assistant Dean's Responsibilities**

The Assistant Dean will provide updated information addressing frequently asked advising questions, including questions about the use of PAWS by students, faculty, and administrative staff. The Assistant Dean will also post a calendar of advising dates, deadlines, and information, and will provide department chairs and faculty advising liaisons with information about updates to PAWS and changes in any program requirements that may be relevant.

The Assistant Dean will also serve as the director of advisement for all students in the Open Option Program and will teach the Open Option Orientation Course. S/he will recruit and select additional administrative staff and/or faculty members to teach additional sections of the course as needed and approved by the Dean, contingent on enrollment patterns.

As advisor to selected students in transition and to selected students in academic jeopardy (including probation, dismissal, reinstatement) the Assistant Dean will provide these students with recommendations to help them move forward to successful completion of all degree requirements. These recommendations may include summer courses or retaking a course to raise their GPA. The Assistant Dean will meet regularly, with these students in order to ensure their progress toward degree completion. These regular meetings and other responsibilities will be part of a contract or action plan developed by the Assistant Dean and the given student and the student will sign the document at the beginning of each semester.

## VI. Advising Structures

Departments will provide group-advising sessions, as appropriate, in advance of course registration for the following semester, in order to provide information efficiently to all majors. Such sessions can be made mandatory for majors by means of a registration hold if necessary. They can take place in a variety of formats as determined by each department.

Students will continue to work with Faculty Advisors in individual or one-on-one advising. In the weeks immediately prior to registration for courses for the following semester, faculty advisors will contact their advisees and invite them to schedule an appointment for such a session. This invitation to schedule an appointment will generally include instructions as to how students should prepare for this meeting. Some faculty advisors will ask their advisees to bring a print out of their academic requirement report and/or a list of courses in the student's shopping cart. Failure to bring required information may result in rescheduling of the advising appointment.

The School will support a system of peer-mentoring to help students network with one another as they develop their own academic programs. Peer Mentors will be nominated by their departments and will participate in an orientation program run by the Assistant Dean.

Students in transition between majors and/or between Schools, including students who are missing prerequisite courses for a new major will be advised by either the Assistant Dean or by the Assistant Provost for Liberal Learning, depending on the situation.

*About this policy:* This policy was developed as the result of a report by an Ad-Hoc Committee on Academic Advising in our School, chaired by Dr. Consuelo Preti (Department of Philosophy, Religion, and Classical Studies). Other members of the committee were: Dr. Julie Hughes (Psychology), Dr. Adam Knobler (History), Dr. Lawrence McCauley (English), Dr. Bruce Stout (Criminology), Dr. Rosa Zagari-Marinzoli (Assistant Dean), Michael Smith (Representative from Student Advisory Council) and Sagar Trivedi (Representative from Student Advisory Council). The Ad Hoc Committee's report was submitted to the Dean in February 2011 and discussed broadly by faculty in department meetings and chairs' council meetings and by students in a student forum. All members of the community were invited to provide comments also through an internet-based survey. Feedback from the entire community was considered in the shaping of the final recommendations that were affirmed by the community in May 2011. The Dean worked with department chairs to develop a plan to operationalize the recommendations and has approved this policy, which will go into effect as of the Fall 2011 semester.

The Advising Syllabus Template was prepared by Dr. Julie Hughes and Dr. Rosa Zagari-Marinzoli on the basis of a model developed by Joyce Stern at Grinnell College (with permission from Joyce Stern of Grinnell College.)

## Appendix: Four-Year Advising Syllabus Template

### Milestones in the First Year

#### By the first registration in August:

- Know how to read and use the course schedule and academics features of PAWS, such as your Academic Requirements Report, Transfer Credit Report to view your SAT scores, AP test scores and placement test scores.
- Register for a good liberal arts program of study
- Register for courses in a manner that keeps open several different possible majors
- Know the drop/add days and how to drop or add a course
- Know the basic requirements for graduation
- Identify one or two places to engage on campus outside the classroom

#### By pre-registration in the fall for spring semester

- Be a more sophisticated user of PAWS, including the **Academic Requirements Report** feature, the **What-if Report and Summary Sheets for your program of study**. Consider courses that will constitute a good liberal arts program of study that keeps open several different possible majors
- Consider what skills you want to develop further while at TCNJ and work those into your next set of courses
- Write a (very tentative!) four-year plan, so you are aware of how a choice of major affects other course choices and how a TCNJ major maps out over eight semesters. Take advantage of the “My Planner” feature on PAWS.
- Consider a semester of off-campus study as part of your plan and determine how you might fit that into your four-year plan.
- Be able to articulate what your next summer could look like. What experiences do you want to have? Do you want to do an internship? If you can't afford an unpaid internship, what can you do to gain experience that builds on your interests
- Know how to look up your grades through PAWS

### How do you prepare for your Advising Appointment?

To facilitate and expedite matters, come to the appointment *prepared*.

- You are strongly encouraged to review the PAWS system and take the PAWS Student Center Tutorial, if you have not yet done so:  
<http://www.tcnj.edu/~it/paws/students.html>.
- Check your unofficial transcript and/or the Transfer Credit link to make sure that all your AP and college credit courses are correctly posted.

- Check out the “What if Scenario” feature in PAWS (Academic Records/My Course History/Academics/What if Scenario) if you want to see how the courses you have taken thus far apply to your prospective major. If you are in a major and are thinking of adding a second major, or an Interdisciplinary Concentration or Minor, you are strongly encouraged to run a What If Report and obtain the requirements for all intended programs prior to meeting with your advisor.
- Prepare one or more tentative schedule by using the “SHOPPING CART” feature. Then bring a printed copy of your shopping cart with you. Make sure you check PAWS prior to your one-on-one advising appointment to verify that the courses you want are still open.
- Check out the Liberal Learning Approved Courses List to review courses you may want to take to fulfill your Liberal Learning requirements.  
(<http://www.tcnj.edu/~liberal/courses/index.html>)

**By pre-registration in the spring for fall semester of 2<sup>nd</sup> year:**

- Each semester get to know at least one faculty or staff member well. You should cultivate these relationships. You’ll learn a lot from them, and they may eventually serve as references for you.
- Consider areas to explore that will help you continue to solidify a choice of major.
- Consider what skills you want to develop further while at TCNJ and work those into your next set of courses
- Re-write your four-year plan
- Consider a semester of off-campus study as part of your plan and determine how you might fit that into your four-year plan
- Realize that things will change during your sophomore year; academics, social life, extracurricular involvements can be very different. Students often don’t realize how fast and profoundly things will change. For example, academic rigor will increase, so get a firm grasp now of good study habits. Significant decisions will soon be upon you, too: choosing a major, forming an academic plan, study abroad, internships; all of these take a significant amount of time.
- Begin earnest conversations about choosing a major (and other “big” questions), if you are an Open Option student. Students frequently make the leap from a particular major choice to “What will I do for the rest of my life?”, but may not share their fear openly. Any choice of major allows plenty of opportunities upon graduation, but you should explore those by talking with me, other faculty, and getting assistance at the Office of Career Center. Visit the Office of Career Center a few times. This can include learning about shadowing opportunities, volunteer experiences, jobs and/or internships next summer. Write or update your resume, and learn how to research opportunities. Then apply!

### **Milestones in the Second Year:**

- Consider areas of study to explore that will help you to solidify a choice of major. (change? See note above)
- Consider what skills you want to develop further while at TCNJ and work those into your next set of courses
- Plan for off-campus study, if this interests you. Attend an informational meeting and research specific programs; apply by the mid-year deadline. The application process is involved and requires that you plan for a major in advance, so allow enough time.
- Re-write your four-year plan while consulting with me
- Think about the particular elements that you might want to include in a four-year plan, such as increasingly advanced work in an area that may lead to a senior thesis
- Work with the staff at the Office of Career Center and/or faculty in your major department to plan for an internship or research experience this summer

### **Milestones in the Third Year:**

- Examine the coherence of your studies (both with and without your major courses) and make adjustments that will both challenge you and help you meet your goals
- Create a partnership with a staff member at the Office of Career Center. Revise your resume and learn to network
- Pursue next steps in your career exploration such as an internship or focused work experience
- Determine when you will take the GRE, LSAT, or MCAT if you think you may be headed to graduate or professional school

### **Milestones in the Fourth Year:**

- (Re)imagine your life after you leave TCNJ. Explore with whom you can talk, besides your adviser, to help you to plan concretely for this transition
- Enhance your partnership with the staff at the Office of Career Services to revise your resume specifically, to network, and to pursue next career steps
- Schedule to take the GRE, LSAT, or MCAT if you are headed to graduate or professional school