

**COUNCIL OF  
DIRECTORS OF STUDENT ACADEMIC SERVICES**

**MINUTES**

**February 21, 2024**

**Zoom - <https://zoom.us/j/99545430954>**

**Passcode - 321037**

**10:30am to 12:00pm**

In attendance: Laurie Beets, Dani Bellmer, Lindsey Brownlow, Larry Burns, Kyndal Campbell, TJ Christ, Brenda Dawes, Ebonie Hill, Nick Holmes, Diane Jones, Kelly Kavalier, Randy Kitchens, James Knecht, Kristen Kulling, Aleigha Mariott, David Mariott, Marissa McIntyre, Marilyn Middlebrook, Lance Millis, Linda Millis, Jeremy Minyard, Beverly Morris, Blake Byers, Rita Peaster, Sky Rogers, Kristi Seuhs, Richard Shepard, Debbie Stump, Betsey Weaver and Shannon Baker, Chair.

**1. Curriculum/Major Change Request System Update – TJ Christ and Blake Myers**

TJ Christ, Academic Records Coordinator for the Registrar's Office (RO), discussed the online major change system and the updates that were recently made. Although there are limitations to this system it has been a good system for OSU over the last few years. The RO is now addressing those limitations with the current update. In the past only two different degrees could be assigned to a student, along with two different minors on a given degree. This current update is expanding the allowable degrees assigned to 5 programs at once. With the ever-increasing role of certifications coming into play, the new way of processing Honors programs, additional micro credential information and an increase in students entering graduate college, there was a significant necessity for additional room to be able to house these credentials. The online major change system needed to be able to adapt, so IT rebuilt it from the ground up, on the back and front end. Although it may look a bit different, it functions very much the same way as the older version. This information, which can be disseminated to advisors across campus, will also be available on the updated webpage.

From TJ Christ's understanding of information from IT, the ability to expand in the future will be easier due to this particular update. He also requested information regarding how many times students request six or more programs to be declared at the same time. The RO is estimating the online major change system update will go live by the end of this month. For further questions, please contact [tj.christ@okstate.edu](mailto:tj.christ@okstate.edu). He is available to answer any questions, hop on a virtual phone call, whatever is needed. The draft communication will be similar to the following:

*The update to the Curriculum/Major Change Request Application that TJ demonstrated during the 21<sup>st</sup> February DSAS meeting will be live this Friday. Below is the communication we plan to send to all advisors on Wednesday morning. Please let us know if you have any feedback by EOD tomorrow.*

*-Blake*

*Hello advisors,*

*The Office of the Registrar is ready to roll out a significant update to the online Major Change Application which addresses the current version's limitations of degree programs and minors. After the update, you will have the ability to add up to 5 degree/certificate programs to a single student and each program will hold up to 5 minors. While the majority of the user interface will be familiar, there will be some differences. Updated instructions will be available on our website soon: [https://registrar.okstate.edu/major\\_change\\_requests.html](https://registrar.okstate.edu/major_change_requests.html).*

*The update will be live on **Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> March**, and the application will be unavailable from 8:30-10:00<sub>AM</sub> while the upgrade takes place. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns and feel free to report any issues directly to our office. Considering the rising trend of additional programs, we are excited to be able to provide this update to you. Thank you all so much for embracing this application and helping us serve our students more effectively.*

M. McIntyre expressed her gratitude for this effort, as one of the colleges that submits a significant number of programs.

## **2. Update on Fall 2023 Degree Clearance – Rita Peaster**

R. Peaster offered IC members background information regarding the annual number of degrees and certificates awarded by OSU. There has been a gradual increase in the total number of credentials awarded on an annual basis between 2017 and 2023. At the same time period she reviewed the fall semesters only from 2017 to fall 2023 and the number of degrees and certificates awarded. There was a significant increase in fall 2023 as well. The reason for this increase is due to the implementation of the first degree clearance term with the revised policy that enables the awarding of credentials for students who have been confirmed as 100% complete with their degree requirements, regardless of whether they have applied to graduate for that term. There were exactly 100 students who were 100% complete with requirements this past fall with no fall grad app. In the fall after an initial round of early degree clearance and diploma issuance, RO first prioritized the students that had a fall grad app. (Leslie Evans' team is to be commended, as well as all of you who have been involved in the Degree Works process to help us automate degree clearance.) RO has averaged awarding 90% of undergrad degrees within the first four days after the term has been placed into history. A list was compiled of 100% complete students with no fall grad app and sent to all of colleges to verify completion. This last fall required a short turnaround time for this group, and the plan going forward is to alleviate that tight turnaround. RO reached out to this group of 100 students, congratulating them on completing their degree and asked them to take one of the following actions, giving them 2 weeks to respond:

- 1) Students were asked to either apply to graduate and provide their preferred diploma name and a reliable mailing address for the diploma;
- 2) If the students did not want their degree to be conferred they would need to request a fall graduation hold;
- 3) Students were informed that if they did not take any action, RO would proceed with the awarding of the degree, and their diploma would be retained in the Registrar's Office.

Out of the 100 students, 6 students requested a fall graduation hold, and the remaining 94 credentials were issued to students. Of those, 36 students had an active spring or summer 2024 grad app, and the remaining 58 students had no grad app, or an old inactive grad app on file. All of the 94 students that had credentials awarded will all be listed in the spring commencement program, so their names will be included in a section indicating that the degrees were earned in the fall. One student expressed concerned about losing their financial aid eligibility going forward. As a reminder RO submitted a message to our student that explains that students who complete all requirements for their first bachelor's degree will lose their future eligibility for Federal and State grants and Federal loans, regardless of whether the degree is conferred. Whether they selected a grad hold or not their financial eligibility going forward is still the same.

## **3. Possible Bachelor's Degree Completers – Rita Peaster**

There is a new effort regarding potential bachelor's degree candidates. Degree clearance requires a combination of Degree Works data and Banner data to identify students who are eligible to graduate. The percent complete data comes from Degree Works, and by fault Degree Works only includes usable data on active students. This fall, when RO was working to identify the potential list of students who might be eligible to graduate, they used L. Millis' suggestion to cast a wider net than what Degree Works uses. RO was searching to find students who thought they had graduated but did not realize that their degree had not yet been conferred. L. Burns with Internal Research and Analytics (IRA) was contacted for assistance regarding the gathering of data, looking at Banner data alone, trying to find students who might be eligible to graduate. He provided RO with a report of students with an active catalog year, ensuring that they had matriculated in a bachelor's degree program, no bachelor's degree was yet earned from OSU and no active grad app was filed for any term. He also included columns in this data set to map all the different high level bachelor degree requirements, not looking at specific major requirements or specific college requirements necessarily, but at least 120 earned hours and a minimum GPA 2.0. High level requirements necessary for any bachelor's degree were also considered. A special student attribute was added to those students to force Degree Works to pull in their data. After the fall degree clearance was complete, L. Burns refreshed that data. This information can be used to identify students who have not

completed their degree but may be eligible for a BUS degree. Or, possibly those students are eligible for another degree by changing catalog years to help them become eligible for their original degree. This is an effort to help students earn an OSU degree, and at the same time possibly increase graduation rates.

B. Morris asked about the number of students on this list, and R. Peaster will need to filter the data first before a good answer can be offered. She reported that the initial list from L. Burns is significant in number. This fall there were approximately 670 students across the entire campus that received the DWEX attribute, and no attempt at breaking this number down by college has been made to date.

This review will require significant effort, as the BUS Declaration is not straightforward. It requires a special declaration form and a plan to be developed. As a reminder, students are required to consent to declaring the BUS program. S. Baker mentioned that this task might be something that the colleges could do during the summer months as the first-year team is working with orientation and enrollment. S. Baker will visit with the small DSAS group to receive some feedback on a tentative communication plan and timeline. RO will update DSAS as progress is made.

#### **4. Support for Academic Alerts for No Evidence of Attendance, Excessive Absences, Stop Attending – Aleigha Mariott**

Care team has noticed through care reports that academic alerts are coming through mainly related to attendance. What has been discovered through these care reports is there are many reasons for students not attending that do not stem from an academic issue but a nonacademic issue, such as transportation issues, family difficulties, mental health issues. Last academic year - 2022 to 2023 – 25% of care cases related to academic retention risk that many times stemmed from academic alerts where advisors attempted to communicate with a student regarding their alert, and there was no response. At that point the student is referred to the care team. There has been an increase of 11% from the previous year, and just this fall, 18% of the cases were related to this issue.

Care team would like to offer some options to be good partners with the OSU academic community to see what assistance can be provided to help address and support the students who are not attending class and hopefully help to alleviate some of the academic advisors' load. Care team could start with a specific population such as veterans students before expanding further. S. Baker clarified care team involvement via automatic notifications. Mariott reiterated that possibly those students may be more responsive to someone who can speak to their life situation when their issue is not related to their academics.

S. Rogers offered positive feedback. As a secondary advisor for her subset of students it also depends on their involvement. She can see a difference with responses from students who she's never met versus students who have interacted with her. S. Baker added that although cumbersome, consideration of the students' full team of support may be necessary. Starting with a small subset, Student Success could try some innovative, perhaps a bit more time-consuming approaches.

L. Burns added his support to the idea of identifying a group, working through the process next semester and possibly using that as a model. With the information from IRA who tracks student connections this could identify the people who have multiple connections and at least flag those individuals in some way so that this outreach does not always fall on the shoulders of the advisors.

K. Kavalier mentioned one of the challenges is being able to remove those students from the advisors' lists so they do not need to contact that person. The advisors may not know which students fall into a specific population, such as veteran, so they do not know which ones to avoid in the outreach process. If that population can be identified, they could be removed from the Advisors' lists before they even land on that list. Otherwise there may be duplicating of processes, which is not helpful. L. Burns agreed that the process would need to be adjusted. S. Baker mentioned a working group for this process, comprised from a Slate team rep, the DSAS rep, A. Mariott, a special populations rep, and perhaps one or two academic advisors.

L. Burns shared that S. Baker asked IRA to provide research on academic alerts, more specifically to predict or to determine if academic alerts are effective overall. IRA compared faculty who submit academic alerts in the same classes and compared courses where the academic alerts are used in some classes, but not in all classes and then compared the grade distributions, retention and withdrawal rates. Finding revealed that in the same courses when faculty use academic alerts in the classes in which academic alerts are used, they have higher retention, rates higher overall grade point averages, and lower withdrawal rates if the faculty use academic alerts. This report indicates a very strong relationship for using academic alerts. We need to figure out a way to get more faculty to correctly use academic alerts.

S. Baker commended L. Burns and IRA for a fantastically written report. She is looking forward to being able to work with that report during her presentations to department heads and new faculty next year. She will be able to utilize the report to demonstrate the efficacy of the early alerts and then possibly incentivize the early alert. The use of early academic alerts system is definitely on the radar. This particular project will be reviewed following the advising restructure implementation. R. Peaster suggested the incorporation of the efficacy data on the alerts be communicated to faculty and published on the website so the information could be easily share. B. Morris recommended this information be shared with deans, Instruction Council and department heads to emphasize the importance.

#### **5. FAFSA Timeline Update – Linda Millis**

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA) were notified late January that instead of receiving the ISIRs data, the college side of the FAFSA information, in January, it will be the first to the middle of March. The government submitted an update notification to the students who have filed the FAFSA. Students had been informed that OSFA would start receiving their information in January, and there have been many concerned students / parents contacting Financial Aid asking for their information. OSFA continues to inform them with the same language the government is recommending. OSFA will be ready to proceed with notification to students as soon as information is received. For continuing students, their financial aid packages will be available sometime in April.

#### **6. Academic Advising Update – Shannon Baker**

S. Baker congratulated N. Holmes on his new title as Assistant Provost for Student Success. His responsibilities have increased, and the size of his team is growing exponentially. Hiring of managers and coordinators is now the current focus, and hopefully two coordinators will be on board by the end of March.

One of the biggest pieces of information and most crucial tasks in advising our students effectively is having the proper information about programs to assist with the logistics of advising a student into the correct classes. L. Burns has been working on a Slate form, the Academic Program Notes form, that will require all programs to complete. The advising working group thought 3 weeks to complete the form would be sufficient. Discussion of the form involved the specifics of the process in completing the form and who to involve – department heads? curriculum staff? specific academic advisors?

L. Burns explained that all the first-year advisors need to be kept informed about ongoing program changes. The Academic Program Notes form will contain information such as:

- Are there certain course sequences?
- Are there certain types of students that need to do certain progress in a certain way.
- Are there just key philosophies about how you've advised students in the past?
- Are there certain updates that only apply to certain catalog years?
- Is there some information that's really key for this program?

The plan is that the Academic Program Notes form will be tied to each program and multiple people may submit their information for each program. There will be one location, most likely a portal, where the Academic Program Note form will be held. The plan is that this process will continue each year so that all advisors will have access to the updates that apply for the next year. If there are additional ideas, please email [Larry.burns@okstate.edu](mailto:Larry.burns@okstate.edu). There is a considerable amount of information, and IRA is trying to consolidate it all into one workable form that will get most of the information that everyone needs. The portal should also allow uploading of information.

The form should be ready for dissemination by March 15. The program reviewers will have 3 weeks to complete the form. L. Millis recommended the form processing through the Directors would allow uniformity with the presentation and importance of the material. M. McIntyre agreed with L. Millis. These forms should go thru DSAS. Most faculty would know what happens junior and senior year, but they may not know what happens that first year. She would really like to see this system centralized between the Directors. L. Millis added that the forms could go to the Directors with the understanding that they would forward the forms to school / department heads or other appropriate people that the college dictates. N. Holmes agreed that the forms should be funneled through the Directors, especially due to their extensive understanding of prerequisites.

The consensus from the Directors was that they would receive the form, forward it to the appropriate people with a request to return to the Director for a final review prior to submitting / uploading the form into the portal. D Bellmer requested that L. Burns present more detail in the Small DSAS meeting about what that form is going to contain.

S. Baker shared her Advising Restructuring presentation during the DSA meeting, the same presentation she will be sharing with Provost's Council on February 28.

Our intent is to create the cohesive advising structure with a focus on the incoming students.

*Commander's Intent: We will create a cohesive advising structure across campus, including the creation of a centralized advising team for incoming students under Student Success*

*Project Team: Shannon Baker, project champion; John Robert Andrews, Jason Belden, Lucy Berger, Lindsey Brownlow, Larry Burns, Brenda Dawes, Caleb Hamman, Travis Herhold, Nick Holmes, Michelle Crew, Gretchen Mafi, Marissa McIntyre, Nathan Richardson, Adrienne Sanogo, Becky Taylor, Betsey Weaver, Brie Bradshaw and Matt Williams.*

We are happy to have Michelle Crew join our advising working group as Tom Joyce took another position. Michelle is assisting N. Holmes with training modules. We have also added Betsy Weaver and Bree Bradshaw to help B. Dawes with technology issues, and Matt Williams is joining John Andrews with the student engagement pieces. The nine subgroups are each working on different pieces of the advising restructure and the timeline is detailed below.

## **Advising presentation:**

### **Milestone**

- Find space for Freshmen Team – February 1  
*Student Success will be gradually moving into Ag Hall in the fall and will have access to temporary space in the summer. They are also working on ways to set up the temporary space, maybe create some quiet zone areas due to the open areas*
- Determine structure for meta-major groupings – December 1
- Develop hiring plan, focusing on building out leadership team first – December 20  
*Manager interviews and interviews for the coordinator of professional development and academic advisor training have been held. Announcements should be coming in the next week or so. Interviews for the Coordinator of the First Year Experience will be held the first week in March, and an executive assistant will be hired as well*
- Prepare for Summer 2024 Orientation – December 20  
*L. Brownlow has been working with N. Holmes on the summer orientation, and a good plan is in place*
- Develop advising practices for Freshmen team – March 1  
*Small DSAS will be weighing in to keep the campus informed by encouraging conversation across the university. Everyone will have a chance to voice concerns*
- Communication with campus community to inform and solicit feedback – Ongoing  
*Updates following Provost's Council*
- Create a Facilities Subgroup – December 20  
*Tour of the space*
- Onboarding of leadership team - March 15, April 29

*Coordinators should be in place by the end of March. Managers will be moving to the team full time by April 29*

- Onboarding of 19-24 academic advisors - May 1.  
*N. Holmes currently has advisors on his team that are just staying with him in First Year Experience. The range is in reference to that each college, as well as student success, has been given a minimum number of advisors with which they can function and their goal number of advisors*
- Communication with current students - Ongoing  
*SGA will be meeting with S. Baker and Brand Management to develop a communication plan with current students about advising change that will be communicated for current students with the small DSAS group as well*
- Training of academic advisors - May  
*The advising working group is developing a structure of training, and the idea is that the more transactional elements of advising will be addressed. Summer orientation will be main focus, followed by the layering of holistic advising. Before he left our group Tom Joyce offered a significant amount of information for an advising training structure. N. Holmes and Michelle Crew are working to develop a training boot camp the first several weeks in May*
- Preparation for Fall semester will take place in July and August
- Preparation for transition to colleges for the Fall semester  
*We need to be thoughtful and careful about the transition to the colleges. Communication to students about their transition should be thorough and helpful as they enter into their life here at OSU with a solid knowledge of the new model*

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Coffee and Conversations with dept heads and one college visit
- Interviews of leadership team nearly complete
- Timeline of next steps constructed
- Training and advising materials are being developed
- Additions to team to help with technology, training, and student development
- Working Group is self motivated and working collaboratively on interlocking elements

#### **Issues:**

- Personnel swirl – student success and the colleges will need to cooperate and communicate throughout this process
- Space and timing
- Gathering program information in a timely fashion
- Onboarding of new advisors, and implementation of training
- Maintaining our energy and momentum

#### **Plans:**

- Begin working with Coordinator of Academic Advisor Training and Professional Development
- Coordinate with college DSAS representatives
- Gather program information from colleges to aid students
- Begin work on logistics of move, including ordering laptops and supplies

S. Baker asked that DSAS members encourage their advisors to think about joining the first-year team, so that a negative advisor swirl can be avoided. S. Baker wants to make sure that the lines of communication continue to remain strong throughout this process. Longer discussions may be necessary to coordinate this process and to ensure clear messaging is being delivered to our students as they move on to the colleges. An advising syllabus is being considered for the first-year students, and DSAS review will be needed.

S. Baker thanked everyone for providing excellent ideas and for supporting our students. This advising restructure could not have happened without everyone's help and assistance.

**7. Other – N/A**

Meeting adjourned at 11:42am

Minutes were recorded by K. Campbell