Personnel

Brenda Boever, Interim Director (100%, 12 mo.)
Virginia Nohl, Executive Office & Administrative Specialist (100%, 12 mo.)
Karen Van Horn, Principle Office & Administrative Specialist (75%, 12 mo.)
Rachel Hanson, Student Work-Study Assistant

Purpose

Academic Advising by the faculty is an integral part of UMM's central mission and is considered part of teaching. The Academic Advising Support Service (Advising) is the administrative arm of the advising system, reporting to the office of the Vice-Chancellor and Dean John Schwaller until March 1, 2006, and thereafter to Judy Kuechle, Interim Dean. Advising staff manage, monitor, and improve the system; initiate campus discussion of advising issues; design and conduct training sessions for new students, summer advisors and first time advisors; respond to students’ and advisors’ questions; and create, update, and/or distribute appropriate advising materials. The Advising staff advise UMM PSEO students, register students who are unable to come to UMM at the scheduled times, and trouble shoot for students with complex academic questions. We support the work of the academic alert system. We administer the assessment of advising in the freshman year as well as the assessment of advising in the major for graduating seniors.

Function:

- Sponsor, design and conduct workshops for faculty
- Sponsor, design and conduct workshops for students
- Monitor advising trends and needs of the campus
- Develop advising materials for faculty and student use
- Manage advising aspects of new student registration
- Provide drop-in and problem solving advising for students
- Oversee the advising and administrative elements of the PSEO Program
- Conduct assessment of advising

Narrative

1. Advising Support to Faculty:

The Advising Office’s role is to empower advisors by providing information, training, support, and intervention in difficult student cases. During each year, the staff tracks advising loads of each advisor and reports data to division chairs. The staff monitors advising trends and needs of the
campus community and responds to faculty advisor requests and questions as needed. The creation of student academic files and the tracking of them are the responsibility of the Advising staff.

- **New Advisor Workshop. August 24, 2006:** This half-day workshop is a practical workshop designed and conducted by Boever, introduced new advisors to the philosophical foundation of advising, advising expectations, and advising materials. Attendance is required. This workshop is the foundation for building a commitment to advising among new faculty advisors. Practical application of theory and day to day use of advising skills and resources were presented by experienced advisors Leslie Meek, Paula O’Loughlin and Barry McQuarrie.

- **Deciding Project Workshop. August 24, 2006:** This one and a half hour workshop brings together faculty advisors who have agreed to learn more about working with students who have not decided on their major. This year’s special emphasis was to preview newly created web-based resources to enhance the students’ exploration process. These faculty advisors also meet once each semester to consider the usefulness of new materials and to share questions and insights into working with deciding students. Advising also solicited and incorporated additional information on career planning from the Career Center for this workshop and web site.

- **Fall Faculty Retreat. August 21-22, 2006:** Boever participated in two separate sessions to provide the faculty with information about the Advising program: 1) Admission, Retention and Advising; 2) Technology Enhanced Advising.

- **Facilitate Access to Technological Tools and Student Data.** Advising provides periodic updates to faculty on upgrades to technological tools that support their work to advise students. Examples include enhancements to “my active advisees”, APAS and management reporting systems. Advising also sends second week of the semester rosters of advisees to each advisor to insure accuracy in record keeping. The Advising handbook is now available in entirety, online.

- **Create and track student files.** Advising files are created for students when they confirm their enrollment to UMM. These files are updated as new academic information about each student is received. As students change advisors, The Advising Office serves as the clearing house for paper files as they are routed from one advisor to another upon students’ requests.

- **Pre-advising survey.** The New Student Guide included a pre-advising survey that allowed students to self-disclose information about their academic backgrounds. This purpose of this survey is to provide more information to advisors about their new advisees and to offer conversation points as they enter into the advising relationship. The survey was introduced for students entering UMM in Fall semester, 2006.

2. Advising Support to Students:

The Advising Office’s role is also to empower students by providing an academic advising system that offers access to planning materials and support that will lead to efficient program planning
and successful completion of a UMM degree. Every degree candidate is assigned a faculty advisor in their chosen major after their initial course registration. The Advising Office serves as a drop-in center for academic related questions.

- Advising workshop for incoming Gateway students: Boever held a workshop on August 1 to help Gateway students understand how to plan their academic programs and what the requirements are for staying in good standing. A special emphasis is placed on understanding liberal arts and the general education requirements.

- Assist students in making advisor or major changes. Advising staff encourages and assists students to take responsibility for making changes in their major and/or advisor as their needs change. This provides accurate planning information and facilitates good communication between the student and advisor which ultimately increases the potential for academic success and completion of their degree. An on-line option for making these changes was made available in 2006: 32 students requested changes using the on-line form.

- Academic Choices Program. This one-hour session held as part of New Student Orientation introduces academic enrichment opportunities available to UMM students. Coordinated by Professor Paula O’Loughlin, the Advising Office assists in developing program content. The actual session is emceed by UMM students who share personal accounts of how these programs enrich their academic experience.

- Communication to current students. An increased emphasis has been placed in improving timely communication with students about registration for classes. In collaboration with the Registrar’s Office, all written and electronic messages were analyzed and refined to reflect current registration practices. Greater emphasis was placed on working with students to register for classes during queued registration periods. Boever worked with the Retention Committee to follow up on current students who did not enroll for the next semester.

- Communication to returning and non-enrolled students. Advising worked in concert with the Registrar’s Office to streamline the registration process for returning students. Correspondence with students was analyzed and refined. With an eye on retention, Boever worked with Pareena Lawrence, Chair of the Retention Committee to develop a communication plan to encourage registration for more students who were eligible to enroll but failed to do so during queued registration.

- Academic Resources Panel. This is a new component of the re-designed New Student Registration program. This session offered parents of new students the opportunity to participate in an informal question/answer session with academic service representatives at each new student registration session throughout the summer. Participants included: Advising, Academic Assistance Center, Disability Services, Study Abroad, Scholastic Committee and academic enhancement opportunities. Boever facilitated these panel discussions.

- Academic Opportunities Expo. March 15, 2006. Held prior to annual planning, Advising sponsored an expo to spotlight academic enrichment program available at UMM. It serves as a
follow up to the introduction to academic enrichment programs students first learned about during New Student Orientation. Mini-sessions explained: areas of concentration, honors, internships, National Student Exchange, Service Learning, Study Abroad, MAPs, MSAFs, Summer Term, and the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). Staff members Tom McRoberts, Karen Ellis, Lori Koshork, and faculty members Argie Manolis, Bart Finzel, Neil Leroux, Pareena Lawrence, Van Gooch, and John Schwaller participated. The Expo was attended by about 30 students. Plans are to refine the logistics of the event and offer it again in Spring, 2007.

- Mid-Year New Student Orientation. Boever worked with Dave Swenson, Student Activities to plan an orientation for new students who entered UMM between fall and spring semesters. This abbreviated orientation to the campus includes introduction to advising system, campus resources (such as library, computing systems, etc.) and social interaction with current students.

- Respond to the advising needs of special populations. In 2005/2006, special consideration was given to the advising needs to two separate student populations: students of color and international/exchange students. With the resignation of the Multi-Ethnic Student Program Director, remaining staff were re-assigned to duties that left little time for advising students. Boever and Nohl worked with Fang Du to assign first year students of color to faculty advisors. Boever and Nohl also worked with Tom McRoberts to recruit faculty advisors with particular sensitivity to international student populations. A listserv was developed, training and a special registration session for the international student population was held just prior to the start of Fall semester.

3. Oversee advising aspects of new student registration

Four single day registration sessions for new students were held in spring and summer 2006. Boever and Nohl participated in a campus-wide group to evaluate and restructure these sessions. Student Activities coordinated the entire program. The Advising staff is in charge of the academic aspects of summer registration, and coordinated our work with Admissions, Student Activities, Student Counseling, Computing Services and the Registrar's Office. The division chairs recruited advisors and the Advising staff conducted briefing sessions to prepare advisors for the sessions. Advising staff assigned students to advising groups, prepared and distributed advising folders, and trained student assistants. A power point presentation was created to systematically introduce all students to the academic program.

With approval by Division Chairs, transfer students are now registered by the Admissions Transfer Coordinator, Jennifer Zyeh-Herrmann and Transfer Specialist, Dorothy DeJager. Prior to registration, all transcripts were evaluated and courses recorded in APAS. GER courses automatically drop into the system and courses that can be used in the major are reviewed by discipline coordinators prior to registration. This new system is working well and is extremely beneficial to students.
Brenda Boever registered 41 first year and 27 PSEO students who were unable to register during scheduled sessions by phone or by special appointment. A power point presentation (delivered by email and Breeze) specifically designed for students registering from a distance was created to introduce the academic program and registration process. This insured that all new students, whether registering on campus or at a distance, receive the same introduction to UMM academics.

4. Advise students

The Advising staff provides UMM students with drop-in and problem-solving advising. Nohl and Van Horn greet and problem-solve with countless students who have academic related questions and, determine whether they need to meet with Boever or if referral is necessary. Many new and returning students are registered by Boever on a drop-in basis, including probationary students who have been unable to make contact with their advisors. The ability to offer one stop, drop-in advising service for complex academic questions is a valuable resource to the campus.

Boever advised 41 high school students (Spring semester data: 18 full-time and 23 part-time) enrolled in the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program as well as prospective PSEO students referred to her by Admissions. PSEO is a labor-intensive program and usually involves over a thousand contacts with students as well as with their high school counselors and the state. Nohl takes responsibility for providing written documentation for the state, to the participating high schools and the UMM Business Office. Additional follow-up with other UMM administrative units occurs throughout the year.

4. Assess Advising annually:

A survey to assess first semester advising has been conducted through the First Year Seminar since 1999. The questionnaire is anonymous and results are distributed to the campus community. Advising staff works with staff in the Dean’s Office and First Year Seminar in preparing and distributing the survey.

The norms for advising in the first term results are positive. The percentage of students who “agree” or “strongly agree” with most questions is very high. Advisors receive highest marks on several questions: (5) “taking time to become acquainted”, (8) “interested in helping me succeed”, and (10) “explains what is expected of me”. Satisfaction has dropped in other areas, most significantly in question #3, being on time for appointments.

[See addendum #1 for 2005/2006 survey results.]

Assessment of advising in the major has been conducted since 2003; tabulations are done after graduation and results are distributed early in the Fall semester. The Advising staff works with the Registrar’s Office staff to distribute the assessment tool at fall semester meetings with seniors preparing for graduation. A tracking method protects anonymity while allowing the Advising Office to send a second request. In March, 2006, the Advising staff participated in the “Grad Finale” program for the first time which gave graduating seniors another opportunity to complete the assessment.

Advisors receive the only copy of the completed assessment (in groups of five to protect students’ identity) to use as they see fit. [approved: Campus Assembly, 2002]

The norms show, not surprisingly, that advising in the major is well thought of. In 2003-04, the very satisfied and somewhat satisfied ratings ranged between 75%-93%. In comparison, the 2005/2006 the Very Satisfied or Somewhat Satisfied ratings range from 66.9%-89.9%. While student’s satisfaction with advising in the major remains high, it is down slightly from the previous years. [See addendum #2 for 2005/2006 survey results.]

5. Special Projects:

- Advising Web site. The Advising Staff assessed the needs of our audiences and completely re-designed the web site. The new site went “live” on Jan. 11, 2006 and features easy access to resources for students, advisors and parents. Many new features and enhancements make it a comprehensive and useful tool for internal and external audiences. Since August, 2006, site usage statistics are now being tracked. Van Horn took responsibility for the programming and development of the web site. All staff participated in evaluating and creating its content.

- Assessment delivery system improved for first year advising survey. Van Horn coordinated efforts to increase efficiency in the collection of data obtained in the first year student advising assessment. Scanned responses now replace the paper and pencil method.

- Deciding Students web site. The Advising Office has developed an on-line resource for students who may be exploring options for a major. The step by step process offers a self-paced approach to relate student interests and abilities to majors and potential careers. Advisors are encouraged to work with advisees as they move through the steps. The new format utilizes the same foundation for developmental advising used by advisors who have been active in the "Deciding Project", but is now being made available to all students and advisors who wish to have easy access to these resources. This web site went “live” in August, 2006.

- The Deciding Project. In its second year, the Deciding project continued 17 returning faculty advisors and five new volunteers. Brenda Boever and Paula O’Loughlin spearheaded the project. Through it, advisors are introduced to special resources to assist students in exploring major options. The project advisors also have opportunities to meet to discuss issues, and often communicate with each other by email to seek input on working with their advisees. A workshop was held before Fall classes began, along with a meeting near the end of each term. A special section for deciding students has been created for the Advising web site.

Statistical

Initial advising assignments are made on the basis of the student’s intended major, identified during summer registration. Assignments thereafter are made at the request of the student or
advisor. A summary of changes made after during the 2005/2006 academic year and advisor assignments by division is summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes of major</td>
<td>532</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change of advisor</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative changes</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Changes</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Average advisee per unit**

- Administration: 21
- Education: 16
- Humanities: 11
- Science/Math: 15
- Social Science: 25

The campus average is 16 advisees for each advisor. The number of advisees per advisor is as low as 2 – in Education, Humanities and Science and Math and as high as 43 – in Administration*.

*Administration includes staff advisors in the Multicultural Student Affairs program who advise MSP students, the Advising Office, which is responsible for advising PSEO students, and Tom McRoberts, who advises international students.

**Plans for 2006-07:**

- **Assessment:** Continue to conduct and distribute both advising assessment instruments and to distribute them to advisors with interpretations. Advising is investigating assessment delivery methods in order to improve student response. Implementation for a web based survey is targeted for September, 2007.

- **Deciding project:** This project will continue with the addition of new advisors and will work toward formalizing assessment of the program.

- **Grad Planner Project:** This all-University initiative will provide students and advisors with academic planning tools that incorporate the APAS, ECAS and Peoplesoft systems. Students will be able to plan their entire academic career using this system while viewing possible scenarios for completing degree requirements. Advising will work with responsible unit to acquaint students and advisors with these resources when they become available.

- **Registration:** The Advising staff will continue to oversee the academic aspects of new student registration and to provide Advising materials for fall and spring registration

- **Technology based resources:** Improvements to the Advising Office website will continue as needed. We will also work toward converting the assessment of advising in the major to a
web-based instrument. Plans are underway to convert the on-line major/advisor change form into a real-time automated process in 2006.

- Freshmen Year Experience Committee. Academic advising plays an important role in the satisfaction and academic success of new students. Boever is a member of this committee to review all aspects of the first year and the group will work to address issues that impact the first year experience.

- Transition: 2006-07 will continue to be a time of transition with Boever in the interim director role, while Nohl and Van Horn continue in their respective roles. We anticipate discussions will continue regarding the administrative structure of advising (and perhaps related units) and look forward to it being solidified after a new Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean is named.

- Workshops: Workshops addressing the specific advising needs will be scheduled for students, new faculty advisors, and Gateway program participants.

Summary:

2005-2006 was an immensely productive year for the Advising staff. Upgrades in technology based resources demanded significant time and attention. We were co-planners of four summer registrations. In addition to managing the advising system and responding to student and faculty requests, we distributed completely re-designed advising handbooks, re-designed and sponsored several workshops for faculty and students, and conducted the assessment of advising.

Brenda Boever, Interim Director of Advising