

Committee on Advising and Student Life

Meeting #1 (2017-18)

Wednesday, September 13, 2017, 10-11am

Kaven Hall 111A

In Attendance: Maggie Becker, Huong Higgins, Jennifer McWeeny, Nima Rahbar (Chair), Paul Reilly, Tricia Stapleton, Kris Wobbe, Madeline Chudy

Absent: Philip Clay, Mohamed Eltabakh, Kristy Giacoman, Yao Long, Cagdas Onal, Graduate Rep

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:02am.
2. For the meeting's agenda, Prof. Rahbar noted there were several issues suggested by members of the committee for discussion: faculty concern regarding residence hall life and space; issues with the forms and process for students completing a 4/3 units MQP; tutoring resources through the Academic Resources Center; quality of academic advising; and departmental advising resources shared through Canvas.
3. Prof. Higgins discussed some concerns she had heard informally from other faculty about students living in "triples" (3 students to each room) in WPI residence halls. Committee members discussed that this was not a new practice, with Ms. Becker noting that it was industry standard. Dean Wobbe clarified that it would be the Dean of Students office to address any issues of student satisfaction in this area, and that the Dean of Students does poll students regularly to identify potential issues. Dean Wobbe also noted that it would be under CASL's purview to help communicate that information to faculty more widely, if there are concerns.
4. Dean Wobbe explained some of the existing issues related to the form and the approval process for students who are completing a 4/3 MQP to satisfy major requirements in two programs. The current approval form does not make it clear to a faculty advisor that the project will count as 4/3 units to satisfy requirements in two programs. Dean Wobbe recommended that CASL take on reviewing the form and reconstruct it, in order to promote a better process for both students and faculty members.
5. Mr. Reilly discussed the Academic Resources Center (ARC) tutoring program that is available to students. He noted that it is important that faculty are aware of the resources that are available to students through ARC tutoring, and which courses have particular support. Dean Wobbe and Mr. Reilly talked about the benefits of the program, for tutors and participants. All agreed that information on ARC tutoring should be included in the meeting minutes to be distributed to the faculty. Mr. Reilly also agreed that the ARC will inform the faculty about the resources available at ARC once the roster of tutoring is available.

6. Dean Wobbe suggested that CASL review the findings and recommendations of the Task Force on Academic Advising. This Task Force was created by the Provost to review such issues as disparities in student access to advising and uneven academic advising loads. The committee agreed that this should be an issue that CASL will examine during the academic year. Profs. McWeeny and Stapleton also shared experiences from their respective departments (HUA & SSPS) that indicate the need to clarify messaging in advisement related to the Humanities and Arts and Social Science requirements.

7. Ms. Chudy, a representative from SGA, brought the committee's attention to "advising modules" available through Canvas that are being shared by BME and ME with their students. She asked for the committee's feedback on who would be the best contacts across campus to pursue support and development for these modules to be implemented in all programs. The module includes resources such as: blank tracking sheets; completed, example tracking sheets; sample 4-year plans; info on MQPs and previous MQP proposals; graduate school info; links to student resources on campus, such as ARC tutoring; and info on how to register for IQPs. The committee agreed that this would be a valuable resource for students, and suggested that Ms. Chudy contact department heads and program directors. Dean Wobbe also stated that she would bring the suggestion up at the next department heads meeting.

8. Ms. Becker informed the committee that the WPI Career Fair, scheduled for Wednesday, September 20th, was at maximum capacity, and that there would be many organizations represented of interest to students.

9. The meeting adjourned at 11am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Stapleton