

FACULTY BOARD FOR UNDECIDED/UNDECLARED STUDENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010 Academic Year

Council Operations

Patrick Guidotti, Mathematics, School of Physical Sciences, Chaired the Faculty Board for Undecided/Undeclared Students in 2009-2010. The Board met four times during the academic year to review and make recommendations to the Undecided/Undeclared Advising program.

Discussion

There were three main discussion items during the 2009-2010 academic year:

1. *The 2009-10 Business Plan for the Undecided/Undeclared Advising program.*
2. *The University Studies 2 course.*
3. *First-Year and Fourth-Year Student Perceptions of the Undecided/Undeclared Program.*

The 2009-10 Business Plan for the Undecided/Undeclared Advising program.

Board members were given a copy of a 2009-10 Business Plan for the Undecided/Undeclared Advising program. The U/U Advising program went through a review during November of the 2008-09 academic year, which inspired a half-day Strategic Planning Retreat held with participants from across the campus as well as from two other local universities in order to discuss and identify U/U mission priorities. Chair Guidotti represented the Board. The Board unanimously voted in favor of the Business Plan.

Priorities

Over the course of the 2009-10 academic year the U/U Advising will dedicate its resources to two equally important priorities:

1. Providing first-year academic support services to help U/U students select a school and progress in their undergraduate academic plan.
2. Providing co-curricular and personal development services designed to help students get the most out of their first-year of university.

Goals

The U/U objective was to clarify student development philosophy and to produce relevant SLOs and departmental goals. This will be achieved by:

1. Articulating new vision and mission statements.
2. Crafting measurable SLOs and stipulating the means by which achievement will be measured.
3. Hosting an in-service event to provide an overview of current student development theory for U/U staff, school advisors, the U/U Faculty Board, Associate Deans, and other key stakeholders.
4. Pursuing open dialogue with colleagues across campus so as to share updates, obtain feedback and identify potential synergies.

One concern of the review had been communication between the Academic Advisors in the Schools and the U/U Advising program. Directors from each of the Schools have been invited to meet individually with the U/U Advising staff for about an hour to discuss what they would like the U/U Advisors to tell students about their programs.

The University Studies 2 course.

The U/U Advising Program asked Board members for assistance with the University Studies 2 course. Some changes had already been made to the course as a result of the discussion held in spring 2009. The major change is that the course is no longer required for Undecided/Undeclared students. In addition, the course is now open to all students who may be interested or who may be questioning their choice of major. Learning objectives have also been identified for the course.

Challenges: These were areas about which the U/U Advising program asked assistance from the Board.

- The quality of the academic lectures
- Topics covered
- Use of technology in the course

The main focus of three of the Board meetings was the University Studies 2 course. Time was spent going over all aspects of the course and Board members offered many valuable analyses and recommendations.

Faculty Board Recommendations for the University Studies 2 course.

- There should be clarification of the Lecture Points section. It is currently not clear that students must attend six of the lectures. In addition, it should be phrased so as to encourage attendance of all six lectures.
- A concern in the course has been trying to convince students that a major does not necessarily equal a career. Students should make their choice based on what they are passionate about. It ought to be made clear why so much information is given about careers and why students are being asked to write a resume.
- A member questioned the use of resume writing. One option might be that students not only get a choice of lecture topics but also a choice of assignment topics: The journal, the resume, and one other. This could solve the question of the resume relating to the major topics.
 - Students could be asked to go to the websites for the different schools/majors and come back with questions. This could help them prepare for the Faculty Panels.
 - Library use and usefulness could be a topic.
 - Students could research a particular School and then give a presentation about it.
 - A subjective component could be added to the resume in which students could explore and present themselves.
- It was suggested that if more time is needed in the course, the leaders could spend less time on introductions.
- It was suggested to explore ways to break down presentation attendance. Inclusion of a question in the survey would be a possibility.
- Journal IV has two sections. Both sections appear to be focused on the evaluation of the course. Maybe one section could be devoted to majors instead.
- Under *Course Requirements* it might be better to say that all students must attend all lectures in order to receive twenty points and that five points will be deducted for each absence.
- There was faculty concern about the *Self-Directed Search Assessment/Personal Analysis (SDS)*.
 - It is believed that taking this type of assessment is controversial and not scientific and as such that the University should not indirectly endorse it by making it a requirement.
 - Students should be lead to do some critical thinking about the path they want to take.
- Additional suggestions for the *Major Pathways Research Project* might be:
 - Focus on the strengths needed to be successful in a particular school.
 - Put like-minded people together in groups and ask each to research a different area.
 - Deemphasize the career aspect and emphasize the schools/majors.
 - Describe the skills and the kind of assignments that might be needed and given in particular majors, respectively.
- The *Extra Credit Options* were deemed unnecessary.
- It was noted that missed classes could be made up by attending one of the LARC workshops and write a paper, as noted in the syllabus.

It was suggested that a line be included in the syllabus suggesting that students read the *Academic Honesty Policy* rather than be given a presentation about disciplinary actions.

First-Year and Fourth-Year Student Perceptions of the Undecided/Undeclared Program: Excerpted from a report that came out of a survey.

The purpose of this study was to gather information from current and former Undecided/Undeclared students about which components of the U/U Program they found to be most helpful in their choice of major/academic unit assignment and in their transition to the university.

During the 2009 Spring Quarter, surveys were distributed to both Undecided/Undeclared first year students as they were exiting the program and former Undecided/Undeclared students in their fourth year at UCI. A

total of 305 first year Undecided/Undeclared students and 140 former Undecided/Undeclared fourth year students completed the surveys resulting in response rates of 40% and 17%, respectively. The first and fourth year surveys were again administered in Spring 2010. The U/U Board will be presented with the combined data from the two sets of surveys in Fall 2010 so that persistent trends can be identified and pursued.

A summary of the statistical results from the surveys was included. The survey was repeated in Spring 2010, so there will be additional data for the Board in Fall 2010 and it can be determined if the trends are persistent.

Patrick Guidotti, Chair
Faculty Board for Undecided/Undeclared Students

Board membership:

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Patrick Guidotti, Chair, Physical Sciences
Laura Kang, Humanities
Dorothy Solinger, Social Science
Gopi Meenakshisundaram, ICS
Philip Thompson, Arts
Natalia Komarova, Physical Sciences
Ahmed Eltawil, Engineering

Ex Officio:

Sharon Salinger, Dean, DUE

Consultants:

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