

Revise Summer Advising
Pilot Program

prepared by the
Advising Think Thank Workgroup to Enhance First-Year Advising

Sue Mennino, Director First-Year Experience, chair
Kate Duncan, Film and Music Industry Studies
Erin Dupuis, Department of Psychological Sciences
Laura Jayne, School of Mass Communication
Brad Petitfils, Provost Office
Liz Rainey, Director of Retention and Student Success
Cathy Rogers, School of Mass Communication
Janna Saslaw, School of Music
John Sebastian, Vice-President, Mission & Ministry

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OVERVIEW

This document outlines a proposal to create a process for advising first-year students during the summer that can be implemented across colleges in order to better serve our incoming students as they transition into Loyola. It was developed by drawing on the current practices within each college as well as the best practices among successful universities, within the constraints of the ongoing financial equilibrium effort. This document proposes establishing a group of summer advisors who will gather information from students before creating their fall schedules and will be available to students during orientation and throughout the summer and into the first weeks of the fall semester. Summer advisors will provide incoming students and their parents with a dedicated academic liaison who is knowledgeable about the Loyola Core curriculum, familiar with the First-Year Seminar courses and introductory courses in all majors, and will adequately respond to the myriad of questions related to first-year academics from incoming students and their parents. Since this is designed to become a university-wide process, it will be administered through the First-Year Experience office.

BACKGROUND

The current strategic plan, *Transforming Loyola 2020*, establishes a vision for rethinking Loyola as a “learning-centered community” that will enable students to fulfill the university’s mission of leading meaningful lives for and with others.

To achieve that vision, the strategic plan places renewed attention on advising, especially at the undergraduate level. The second of the plan’s four overarching strategies calls for activity that facilitates students’ discovery of a career and a life of service. The second action item under this heading explicitly addresses the creation of “a new model of advising that is collaborative across academic and non-academic units and that focuses on student development, not just progress toward degree.” In developing an approach to implementing *Transforming Loyola 2020*, the Strategic Planning Team (SPT) identified this initiative among the “high-priority action items” that should receive immediate attention.

Consequently a subcommittee of the SPT was constituted in order to develop a set of recommendations for this new advising model. This subcommittee, which included faculty as well as staff from the Offices of Student Success and the Common Curriculum, conducted multiple site visits during the Spring 2015 semester to peer and aspirant institutions identified as having successful advising centers or programs with a focus on holistic advising that might be suitable for emulation on Loyola’s campus. The findings from these visits were contextualized by a literature review and presented in a report to the SPT at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 academic year. This report offered numerous recommendations for concrete action steps aimed at creating a new model of advising.

In the fall of 2015, the Provost appointed an Advising Think Tank to further pursue this high-priority action item. This body composed of nearly 30 faculty and staff from across the university, met for an all-day retreat with consultants Frances Lucas and Margaret King on October 31, 2015. The retreat concluded with the identification of additional priorities; among them was the need to re-examine advising during the first-year, including the preceding summer. The Think Tank established additional workgroups to develop plans around these priorities, including a Workgroup to Enhance First-Year Advising, which has since been meeting regularly to develop the recommendations that follow in this report.

The imperative to develop a new model for advising adumbrated in *Transforming Loyola 2020* intersects with other action items in the strategic plan that will need to be considered further by the Workgroup and the Think Tank, namely, the design and implementation of “an e-portfolio program, which all

undergraduate students will use to compile a holistic record and reflection on their Loyola experience” and the integration of “Ignatian principles of discernment into advising, career planning, and support for lives of service.” It is worth noting that the practice of discernment is a particular feature of Ignatian spirituality from the outset. The *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius at their heart outline a process for making an “election,” or decision, about a life-path, a process that includes attending to the motivations, both positive and negative, that incline us to one decision over another. The process aims to move us closer to a more authentic understanding of our own deepest desires and of God’s dream for each of us. A university that calls itself Jesuit has, therefore, an obligation to provide holistic advising that empowers students to arrive at a fuller understanding of their motivations in plotting a course toward a particular degree or career and of the values according to which they will live out their aspirations; such a university is also fortunate in being able to avail itself of a centuries-old tradition rooted in self-exploration and self-understanding. The development of a new model of student-centered, holistic advising at Loyola represents not so much innovation, then, as a return to our roots. Thus, to address the majority of the recommendations made by the Advising Think Tank consultants, the Advising Think Tank Workgroup to Enhance First-Year Advising proposes that we establish a group of *summer advisors* be the primary academic liaison between the first-year student and the university.

PROCESS

This process (see flowchart) assumes the creation of a set of “summer advisors” who will work with incoming students and department chairs to create the students’ fall schedules (see attached draft Course Scheduling Questionnaire) and be their primary point of contact about academic issues from the time they matriculate until they are assigned a major advisor, which will occur as soon as possible in the fall semester, before spring registration advising.

- Summer advisers:
 - will advise students in CAS from May to mid-September
 - carry a maximum advising load of 20 first-year students
 - are responsible for creating first-semester schedules for their advisees (after May 23)
 - must be available on-campus during the summer orientation sessions (6/22-7/1)
 - must be electronically available to their advisees during the rest of the summer
 - attend a training session in April; a Summer Advising handbook will be provided
 - receive a stipend of \$1,000

Course Scheduling Questionnaire (DRAFT)

for
First-Year Students

Welcome to Loyola University New Orleans! Please complete this questionnaire as soon as possible. Your advisor will use your responses to prepare your schedule for the fall semester.

Name: _____ **CWID** (Campus-Wide ID Number): _____

Please enter your current contact information so your advisor can reach you easily:

Email address: _____ **Phone number:** _____

According to our records, **you intend to major in** _____. If that is still the case, skip to the next question; otherwise, please indicate your new intended major.

Intended major(s): _____

Please check the boxes next to subject areas you're most interested in:

- Humanities (English, history, philosophy, religious studies)
- Natural Science (biology, chemistry, physics)
- Social Science (Communication, Criminal Justice, Political Science, Sociology)
- Creative Arts and Cultures (Dance, Languages, Music, Visual Arts)

One of the Loyola Core courses all first-year students take in their first semester is a **First-Year Seminar**. Please click [here](#) for a list of the seminars offered this fall. Read through the course descriptions and then list at least five of the seminars you would be most interested in taking and a short explanation as to why that course appeals to you. NOTE: Honors students should make their selections from the list of Honors First-Year Seminars **only**.

1st choice: _____

2nd choice: _____

3rd choice: _____

List the subjects in high school that came easily to you or that you especially enjoyed:

List the subjects in high school you found challenging or that you do not enjoy:

Will you be a member of an **athletic team**? If so, which one?

AP Credit: To earn college credit at Loyola through Advanced Placement (AP), students must earn a 4 or higher and have an official score report sent to Loyola. By the time you attend, will you take one or more AP exams? If so, please list the test(s) and the scores, if you have them.

Dual Credit/Transfer courses: To possibly earn college credit at Loyola for dual credit or transfer course, students must earn at least a C and submit a final, official transcript. Do you expect to receive any dual credit or transfer any credits to Loyola? If so, please list the courses:

Is there **any other information** you would like your advisor to know before creating your schedule?