Overview of The Academic Advising Center

The University of Iowa

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Mission

The mission of the Academic Advising Center (AAC) is to provide academic advising to almost all entering students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, many entering transfer students, and special status non-degree students. Advisors teach students how to: plan their academic programs of study; select courses each semester; explore possible majors; seek information on- and off-campus; make viable academic decisions; and to solve academic problems. Because academic advisors establish durable personal contact with students, they are a major force for student retention.

In addition to its advising program, the Center oversees specific retention programming efforts aimed at entering first-year and transfer students, including IowaLink, Courses in Common, College Success Seminar, The College Transition and Transfer Transition.

The Advising Center collaborates with undergraduate colleges, academic departments, professional programs and student services offices throughout the campus to enhance retention and the undergraduate educational experience. Advisors provide departments and colleges with demographic information about students, feedback on course offerings, comments on curricular changes and serve as ex officio members of admission committees in some academic programs. The Center works closely with related student services offices for programming and for advising services (e.g. Admissions Visitors Center, Orientation Services, Career Center, Student Disability Services, Support Service Programs, University Counseling, Residence Hall Services and Student Athletic Services). Advising staff also serve on a variety of university-wide committees that deal with issues of student recruitment, enrollment, registration and retention.

Academic Advising Center Philosophy

The Center’s advising program has a proactive philosophy.

- After each orientation program, advisors check students’ schedules, contacting students about whose schedules they have concerns.
- The Center sends emails reminding advisees of their new student meeting appointment as well as emails inviting them to a planning appointment.
- Advisors contact and discuss options with students who received mid-semester delinquency reports.
- After first semester grades are posted, advisors contact students who are on probation or whose grades in specific courses may make them ineligible to continue in a course sequence.
- Advisors contact students who have made significant academic achievements.
Advising Program for First-Year Students

Students first meet with their assigned advisor during their summer orientation program. Advisors help students build schedules appropriate for their academic interests, goals and preparation. After fall semester begins, advisors expect to meet with students a minimum of three times:

- **New student meetings** occur early fall semester. The primary purpose of the meeting is to give students a better understanding of academic advising—what we do, what we expect of students and how we can help them.

- Students are asked to schedule **planning appointments** late September-October. In these appointments advisors may: create a plan to graduation, compare possible majors, assist struggling students in finding academic support, discuss factors in students’ lives that affect their academics and refer students to other University resources.

- **Early registration appointments** (November-December) are abbreviated appointments to which students prepare a schedule (based on the planning appointment). Advisors review students’ schedules and clear them for registration.

With the exception of the new student meetings, the appointment schedule repeats itself spring semester. Please note that appointments reflect minimum expectations; students are encouraged to contact their advisors whenever they have questions.

Retention Programs

The Academic Advising Center oversees several programs aimed at retaining first-year and transfer students. The programs focus on teaching students college level expectations, creating small, interactive learning communities and integrating students into the University socially and academically.
Academic Advising Center 2005
Facts-at-a Glance

Staff

1 Director
4 Senior Associate Directors
1 Program Assistant
34 Academic Advisors

Students

Student Caseload: 8,782

Student Traffic
The number of student visits has been relatively consistent over time, averaging

- 17-18,000 visits fall semester
- 13-14,000 visits spring semester

Students by Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>3702</td>
<td>3009</td>
<td>1225</td>
<td>552</td>
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<td>8782</td>
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</table>

Majors Advised

Majors/Designations/Programs: 69

- All first-year CLAS undergraduate majors except Physics, Speech & Hearing, Pre-Nuclear Medicine Technology (46)
- Open Majors (1)
- Pre-Professional: Chiropractic, Law, Medicine, Mortuary Science, Optometry, Physical Therapy, Physician’s Asst, Veterinary Medicine (9)

Majors Advised to Graduation

- All Pre-Professional Designations
- International Studies
- CLAS International Business Certificate

Selective Admission Undergraduate Majors: 13

Retention Programs

- Courses in Common
- IowaLink
- College Transition (in collaboration with Orientation Services)
- College Success Seminar
The College Transition is a two-semester hour first-year experience course created especially for University of Iowa students. The class is taught in small sections with an emphasis on class discussion and small group activities.

**Goal**

- Help entering students make the transition to university academics and the college environment smoothly and successfully.
- Improve persistence from first-to-second year.

**Course Content**

Topics include

- the differences between high school and college (University expectations)
- locus of control (assuming responsibility for one’s life)
- setting goals
- time management
- classroom skills (e.g. taking notes, preparing for exams, reading strategies)
- diversity
- personal finances
- health and wellness.

Assignments are designed to promote integration into the University. For example, students:

- attend cultural events and campus activities
- visit an instructor
- participate in a campus resources scavenger hunt
- attend a library orientation
- visit the Career Center and use Center resources to explore majors and careers

Students reflect on these experiences through written assignments. Class assignments also include self-assessment activities such as time management logs, personal expense logs, and a learning style inventory.

**Student Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>CT</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>861</td>
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<td>Non-CT</td>
<td>3398</td>
<td>2780</td>
<td>2687</td>
<td>2659</td>
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Note: CT enrollments reflect only students who completed the course.
College Transition
Academic Profile

ACT Composite

<table>
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<th>Not Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
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High School GPA

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<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.55</td>
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College Transition Persistence

Persistence to Second Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolled College Transition</th>
<th>Not Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation

911 first-year students enrolled in The College Transition during the fall semester 2004. 827 completed a survey. This yields a response rate of approximately 91%. Surveys were completed during the final class session.

Registration

Respondents first heard about the course during Summer Orientation programs. Throughout the nine summer programs an even number of seats in sections 1-57 were released. Typically 100-125 students were enrolled each program.

Results: Course and University Experience

Over 95% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- *This instructor is effective in teaching the subject matter of this course.* (97%)
- *This instructor creates an atmosphere where ideas can be exchanged freely and easily.* (96%)
- *This course has helped me feel more comfortable as a new student at the University.* (95%)
- *This course is well planned and organized.* (95%)

Over 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- *The instructor seems concerned with weather I learn course content.* (93%)
- *I am encouraged to apply new knowledge and skills.* (93%)
- *I’m glad that I chose to attend the University of Iowa.* (90%)
- *Taking this course together with other first semester students has made it easier for me to participate in this class.* (91%)
• I thought that the college transition was just an introduction to college, but it prepared me with a lot of helpful life-long abilities.

• I feel more comfortable with the University as a whole! I really enjoyed the class it was a nice break from lecture classes. It was a very open environment with lots of open conversations. I LOVED it 😊! I am a lot more confident when it comes to campus issues, without this class I feel I would be LOST. It is good to know others are feeling the challenge in transitioning!!

• This class was very insightful into opening up my eyes and views about my life. College Transition helped guide me in the direction I wanted to go in life. A very helpful and effective course. Should be required by all first year students.

• I recommend this course to every entering students. I think it has been incredibly helpful in my adjustment to college life. The first semester of college is hard. There are a lot of things to get used to and this class makes those things a lot easier! I found it very calming that other students in the class feel the same way I do about a lot of things.

• It was a very, very useful course which enabled me to learn the right things to do to become successful in college right from my first semester. The knowledge that I will take away from this course is invaluable.

• I really enjoyed this course. It helped me a lot in dealing with the change from high school and college. I also met new people since the class was small and we were able to interact. I feel I learned a lot of things such as time management, writing styles, test taking skills, etc… that I can apply to my other courses. I had a fun time in the class with all the different activities we did. Also, my instructor was very nice and made me feel comfortable.

• Thank you! This course was incredible, it really helped me adjust to college and feel comfortable academically and socially. I would definitely recommend this course to any incoming freshmen at the U of I.

• I thought the course was very beneficial! I enjoyed getting to talk w/ other students in the discussion style of the classroom! My instructor was a great person to confide in!

• I thought that College Transition helped me to realize some of the things that were going on in my life that were good and bad. It showed me how to keep the good and fix the bad. I also thought that the teacher was very open and accepting.

• This class was very useful for me to take for my freshman year. It only met two hours per week, so it didn’t cram my schedule. It helped me to get more involved, which I wouldn’t have done on my own. Helped me to reflect on my habits, change the ones I needed to, instead of simply letting my freshman year blow by without learning about myself. It had great focus on learning about yourself and really improving who you are, which I feel is very helpful.

• This class helped me transition really well to the new settings I was in at the beginning of the year. I was always telling my friends things I had learned in this class.
The Transfer Transition is a two semester hour course designed to introduce transfer students to the University of Iowa and ease their transition to a new academic and social culture.

**Purpose**

An offshoot of The College Transition, Transfer Transition aims to
- provide an extended orientation to the University of Iowa for transfer students
- help transfer students integrate socially into the University
- encourage persistence among transfer students

**Course Content**

Course topics and assignments parallel those of The College Transition with, however, a much heavier emphasis on major and career exploration.

**Student Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Transition</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-TT</td>
<td>1022</td>
<td>1185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation

57 transfer students enrolled in The Transfer Transition during the fall semester 2005. 56 completed a survey. This yields a response rate of approximately 98%. Surveys were completed during the final class session.

Registration

Respondents first heard about the course during Transfer Orientation programs.

Results: Course and University Experience

Over 95% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- This instructor creates an atmosphere where ideas can be exchanged freely and easily. (100%)
- This course has helped me feel more comfortable as a new student at the University. (98%)
- I am encouraged to apply new knowledge and skills. (98%)
- I would recommend this course to an incoming transfer student. (97%)
- This instructor is effective in teaching the subject matter of this course. (97%)
- The instructor seems concerned with whether I learn course content. (96%)
- This course is well planned and organized. (96%)
- Taking this course together with other transfer students has made it easier for me to participate in this class. (95%)
- I feel more connected to the University as a result of this course. (95%)

Over 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- I know more about what it means to be a UI student as a result of this course. (93%)
- This course was what I expected, based on information I received before it started. (93%)
- I’m glad I chose to transfer to The University of Iowa. (93%)
- At this point, I plan to return to the University of Iowa for my sophomore year. (90%)
• I really liked this class because it really helped me get in tune with Iowa’s campus. It showed me where to go to find information and made me think of things I should be looking to do in the future. I just wish that with all the papers we write, that we would get a real grade for the coarse.

• I thought the course was very informative and I really enjoyed taking it.

• I enjoyed this course. It was very helpful at helping me discover resources at Iowa. This probably why I am enjoying Iowa.

• The course was great. Having other transfer students here was a great source of getting to know Iowa, b/c you’re all doing it together. The course helped point out a lot of things about test, stress, etc. that we normally don’t bother to reflect on. It was also great to have open discussions w/ so many willing participants.

• I really enjoyed the atmosphere in this class. (The instructor) did a great job at listening to us and making sure we got what we needed out of this course. It proved to be very helpful and I strongly recommend it to other transfer students.

• This class was a good way to meet people and talk about any issues you have with school. It was helpful to know that other people were experiencing similar situations.
CSS is an optional one-semester hour course designed specifically for first-year students who have been placed on probation at the end of fall semester. The class is taught in small sections with an emphasis on discussion and small group activities.

**Purpose**

- Help first-year probationary students develop the attitudes and behaviors they need to succeed
- Encourage first-to-second year persistence of entering first-year students who have been placed on probation at the end of fall semester

**Course Content**

Course topics and activities focus on self motivation, locus of control, problem solving, time management, classroom skills (e.g. taking notes, preparing for exams, reading strategies). Assignments emphasize self assessment and self reflection through journals, the College Student Inventory and time management logs.

The course aims to better integrate probationary students into the University through assignments requiring interaction with faculty and staff (e.g. probation interview, CSI conference, instructor visit, Career Center visit and UCS presentation).

**Student Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
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<td>110</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-CSS</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

- CSS numbers indicate students who *completed* the course.
- Non-CSS numbers reflect *only those students who returned spring semester* and who, therefore, could choose to enroll in the course.
Persistence to Second Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolled College Success Seminar</th>
<th>Not Enrolled</th>
<th>Entering Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
86 students enrolled in College Success Seminar during the spring semester 2005 completed a questionnaire (77% of students enrolled at the end of the course)

Class Experience
90% of respondents would recommend CSS to a friend on academic probation.

Over 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
- This course is well planned and organized.
- This instructor is effective in teaching the subject matter of this course.
- I am encouraged to apply new knowledge and skills.
- This instructor seems concerned with whether I learn the course content.
- This instructor creates an atmosphere where ideas can be exchanged freely and easily.
- I know more about what it means to be on academic probation as a result of this class.

Over 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement:
- Class discussions are helpful to my learning.
- It has been helpful to meet regularly with other students on academic probation.

Course Content
Respondents were asked to identify the three class topics most important to them. The following were the most frequently identified topics:
- Time management (73%)
- Calculating GPA (53%)
- Preparing for tests (44%)

Respondents were also asked to identify the three most important assignments. The following were most often selected:
- Report on probation interview with CLAS Academic Programs & Services (72%)
- Time Awareness assignment (70%)
- Appointment with CSS instructor regarding CSI (52%)
- Meeting with an instructor to discuss a test, assignment, or class concerns (52%)
It helped me regain control of my academic situation. This class made me understand there was something I could do about my academic habits and skills, and gave me the confidence to help myself succeed.

...this course helped me to understand why I was on probation and what I needed to do to get off it.

It was helpful to have a class about taking classes b/c it is relevant to all subjects.

Very helpful to be surrounded by students in the same boat as me.

At first, I wasn’t sure about this class, but I think that this class is a really good idea. The activities we do and the skills that are taught are very useful. {The instructor} is very nice and makes you feel comfortable...

I think this class is very useful for students who want to be in college, but are having some problems.

I am hopeful that what I learned from the class will help me not only next semester, but also in the far future.

Being in this class really helped me get turned around and get my priorities set.

I thought it was a great class to take. It helped me with things that I had been struggling with, such as study skills, goal setting and motivation. I would definitely recommend this class to others on academic probation.

I was at home on Christmas break when on a whim I decided to sign up for CSS. This turned out to be the best decision I could have made.
IowaLink is a first-year academic support program for recruited students who show potential for academic success but who do not meet the University of Iowa’s admission standards. Though the program’s primary target is recruited students, because students who qualify for EOP are considered a recruited group, IowaLink serves a diverse student population and contributes to the University’s efforts to increase diversity among undergraduate students.

The IowaLink program includes an academic year (fall and spring semesters). To successfully complete the program students must meet College of Liberal Arts and Sciences standards for good standing and/or continuation of enrollment at the time of the May academic review.

Program Goal

IowaLink aims to

- help students develop the knowledge and skills essential for academic success at the college level
- achieve a higher level of first-to-second year persistence from Link students than their high school academic profiles predict.

Program

The program is delivered through instructional and academic support components designed to provide social support as well.

Required instructional components include a two-semester length first-year seminar, enrollment in specified General Education Program courses and study groups.

Each student works with an academic support team composed of instructional and student services personnel. Academic support teams maintain frequent contact with students, closely monitoring student progress and collaborating on early intervention efforts.

Student Participation

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IowaLink Student Persistence

**Persistence to Second Year**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
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</table>

IowaLink students

- Persist from first-to-second year at a much higher rate than their high school academic profiles would predict
- Persist at roughly the same rate as their regularly admitted student cohort.

**Iowa Link Student Performance**

Range of Fall Grade Point Averages (Cumulative) by Entering IowaLink Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>A- &gt;3.67</th>
<th>B+ &gt;3.33</th>
<th>B &gt;3.00</th>
<th>B- &gt;2.67</th>
<th>C+ &gt;2.33</th>
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<th>C- &gt;1.67</th>
<th>D+ &gt;1.33</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
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</table>

Comments

- There are no entering IowaLink students with high school academic profiles predicted to achieve a 2.0 grade point average at the end of fall semester. Yet, very few Link students fall below a 2.0 gpa at the end of their first semester and the majority achieve above a 2.0.
- Each year some IowaLink students become eligible for membership in the Honors Program (3.33 gpa)
- Each year some IowaLink students are placed on the Dean’s List (eligibility = 12 graded semester hours with a gpa of 3.5 or greater)
- In each IowaLink cohort, students have graduated in selective admissions programs and majors.
Each fall semester, Courses in Common (CIC) provides first-year students with the opportunity to take two or three courses together with a group of about 20 other first year students. Each CIC “option” is composed of General Education Program or major courses that students typically take during their first semester. (Sample options follow)

**Purpose**

Courses in Common aims to
- help integrate students into the University community by providing a means for students to quickly establish social and academic connections
- make a large university feel smaller to first-year students

**Fall 2005 Student Questionnaire Summary**

350 randomly selected CIC participants were invited via e-mail to complete an online questionnaire. (Response rate = 32%)

- 92% of respondents indicated that they would recommend CIC to an incoming student

- Over 90% agreed:
  - Knowing that I would see some of the same students in more than one class made me feel more comfortable as a new student at the University.
  - CIC was a good way for me to meet people.
  - At this point, I’m planning to return to The University of Iowa for my sophomore year.

- Additionally, 80% or more agreed:
  - My involvement in CIC was one of the most positive experiences of my first semester at The University of Iowa.
  - Having some of the same students in more than one class made it easier for me to participate in class discussions.
  - I’m glad that I chose to study at The University of Iowa.
Instructors of 157 single-section courses or discussion sections that had been included were invited to complete an online questionnaire. Responses for 54 sections were received (35% response rate). Of the 45 respondents who knew generally which students in their class were CIC participants:

- 75% or more agreed that CIC students:
  - Had a “group identity” because of their involvement in Courses in Common.
  - Benefited socially from their participation in Courses in Common.

- 69% disagreed that they (the instructor) had to work harder to achieve a satisfactory level of learning.

- Most instructors rated their CIC students as “about the same” as first year students in general on the students’ course grade, overall quality of work, overall performance, study habits, and interaction with the instructor. Over 50% indicated that their CIC students, compared with first year students in general, had better:
  - Participation in class
  - Interaction with peers