Academic Advising Committee Recommendations
[May 2003]

The University of Hawai‘i at Hilo Academic Advising Committee was created and convened in the fall semester 2002 through the spring semester 2003 at the request of Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Christopher Lu and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Keith Miser. The committee was charged with making recommendations to improve advising on campus based on assessment done of both current and graduating students. Dr. Michael Bitter and Dianne Higgins served as co-chairs, and members of the committee were: Dr. Olga Cordero-Braña, Kamila Dudley, Karla Hayashi, Timothy Kane, Ku‘ulei Kepa‘a, Jim Mellon, Hiapo Perreira, Buddy Perry, Dr. Craig Severance, Dr. Robert Stack, and Karlen Suga. The following are the committee’s recommendations:

I. Encouraging a culture of caring and productive advisors

The Academic Advising Committee recognizes that good advisors display qualities such as helping a student plan for a future career, tracking progress towards graduation, being conscientious about understanding and knowing UH Hilo’s academic policies and requirements, and showing a genuine care and interest in students. Consistently and avidly promoting this type of advising through recognition would only encourage this type of behavior in more faculty advisors.

Recommendations:

1. Recognize exemplary advisors with an annual award given by the UH Hilo administration. Components of this award should include all or a combination of the following: monetary gift, release time, and recognition on the UH-Hilo website.

2. Publicize the qualifications of the award year-round to encourage good advising.

3. Make advising a more significant part of hiring, contract renewal, and tenure decisions.

II. Ensuring that each student places into and is able to take the appropriate Math Course for their skill level

The process of placing a student into the appropriate Math course can be a confusing, inconsistent, and frustrating one for the student, advisor, and Math faculty. Coordination and organization are essential to the effectiveness of the Math Placement Exam and to students’ success in Math courses.
Recommendations:

1. Give serious consideration to working collaboratively with The Learning Center (operated by Hawai‘i Community College) to offer math placement testing for both HawCC students and UH Hilo students. Combined testing would probably be more cost effective and provide a central placement-testing site for both campuses. UH-Hilo would still be responsible for various aspects of the Math Placement Exam and the math faculty still needs to maintain the data and make decisions relative to the test.

2. The Math Department should assign a mathematics “point person” to serve as the liaison between HawCC and UH Hilo. The point person would oversee the math placement testing and serve as a contact person for faculty and students when they have questions about math placement. Give this point person release time, similar to the English faculty point person for the Writing Placement Exam (Karla Hayashi).

3. We recommend that a meeting of the faculty from math (as many as possible) and related majors that require math and statistics courses be convened by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. One of the purposes would be to provide an opportunity for faculty to discuss their concerns about math preparation directly with the Math Department. In addition, another topic for discussion should be whether or not to require the Math Placement Exam at all, and if so, how the requirement would be enforced. Problems could be stated and solutions could be solicited to address the problems.

4. The administration and the Math Department need to address the issue of students placing below 100-level math courses, and the university not providing the appropriate courses. One suggestion was that CCECS offer courses that would help prepare students for certain courses in a major. For example: offer a non-credit course which is the equivalent to high school algebra to prepare students for MATH 104F: Pre-calculus I: Elementary Functions. Another example is to offer a non-credit course assist students in preparing for SOC 280: Statistical Reasoning in Social Inquiry; and PSY 213: Statistical Techniques. Another suggestion is to resurrect MATH 103: Fundamentals of Algebra, as a way to help prepare students for higher levels of Math.

5. Explore the option of offering on-line Math and English placement testing. This will become more important as UH Hilo moves to cyber-advising.

   In the meantime, UH Hilo needs to be sure that our current and new entering students are able to take the Math Placement Exam and receive helpful advice. Students also need to be able to take the courses they place into. The Math Department needs to be provided with the faculty support to add the needed sections.
The PC lab in the UCB 102 was used for large group placement exams during orientation and the Math Lab in College Hall 6 was used for individual appointments. These services need to be continued until final decisions are made about the Math Placement Exam.

6. The Math department needs to ensure that pre-requisite courses are put into Banner. Placement scores from the Math Placement exam must also be inputted to ensure students do not take courses which are too easy or difficult for them.

III. Fostering an awareness of the responsibilities of advising

The Advising Center has posted flyers and distributed handouts on the dual responsibility of advisors and advisees. The General Advising Coordinator sends e-mail messages to the UH Hilo community on a regular basis outlining these points as well. It is clear that advising is a dual partnership between advisor and advisee, and that advisees need to be aware of these responsibilities so they may hold themselves and their advisors accountable.

Recommendations:

1. The following statement on advising should be put on each instructor’s syllabus outlining the importance and responsibility of advising:

   Advising is a very important resource designed to help students complete the requirements of the University and their Individual majors. Students should consult with their advisor at least once a semester to decide on courses, check progress towards graduation, and discuss career options and other educational opportunities provided by UH Hilo. Advising is a shared responsibility, but students have final responsibility for meeting degree requirements.”

   The Advising Coordinator will send this statement to faculty each semester via the ‘Ohana listserv as well as through new faculty orientation and training sessions.

2. Create a way to notify students online that it is advising week and that they should go see their advisor before registering.

3. When students are denied graduation because of not fulfilling a graduation requirement, a copy of the letter sent to the student should also be sent to the advisor, as well as the department chairperson.

IV. Transfer Credit Evaluations

The current Transfer Credit evaluation process is inconsistent and frustrating to advisors and students alike. It takes a long time for transcripts to be evaluated and then distributed to advisors and students.
**Recommendation:**

1. UH Hilo should create a more timely and accurate Transfer Credit evaluation process. The Admissions and Records offices should agree on how the process should proceed so initial transfer credit recommendations are correct and are honored.

**V. Banner Implementation**

With the implementation of the Banner student information system, there will be changes in the way that advisors will be able to get information about students relevant to advising.

**Recommendations:**

1. The administration must immediately address the need of both students and faculty to access an on-line degree audit.

2. All faculty members must have view access to students’ academic records on Banner.

3. UH Hilo must provide advisors with training on how to use the new Banner system so they will be able to access the information and forms available.

**VI. Dissemination of Information**

UH Hilo tacks a central place to disseminate information to students and faculty about registration, advising, and important university news in general.

**Recommendation:**

1. UH Hilo should create a dearly visible and readily available Information Center or system where students and faculty can access pertinent information about UH Hilo such as events and announcements.

**Major Issues the committee will address in the fall 2003 semester:**

1. Establishing an assessment component to evaluate the effectiveness of academic advising services on campus.

2. Preparing and maintaining advising materials.

3. Refining and improving the campus wide-advisor training and professional
development program.

4. Determining when and how newly admitted students are assigned to an advisor, as well as what expectations will be placed on advisors.

5. Deciding if the current advising model serves us. Should we hire professional advisors?

6. Determining if we can incorporate advising over the Internet so students don’t need to be physically here to register.