

Advising Centers' Position on Core Curriculum Changes for 2010-2011

As professional advisors in the University Academic Advising Centers, we work closely with students concerning their academic progress towards graduation. We would like to formally state our analysis of advising implications as they relate to changes of our Core Curriculum.

Along with faculty, professional advisors have worked over the past year to assist with the implementation strategies for the current 2009-2010 Core Curriculum. Our experience extends beyond the replacement of the general education program to the numerous curriculum changes which were processed as a result of the implementation of the new Core Curriculum. Perhaps a leading advising challenge we have already experienced is the short amount of time to not only implement strategies but communicate changes to prospective students in high schools and Virginia community colleges.

We request our faculty to consider and set forth an appropriate timeline for any changes in the existing Core Curriculum. For many of our students, advising begins long before their arrival to campus as an RU student. We have already met with numerous prospective students and discussed transfer equivalencies, core curriculum requirements as well as major requirements. As we have seen in the past year, many of our prospective transfer students base their course enrollments at their respective community colleges on information as it relates to our recommendations and curriculum requirements. We feel it is imperative to disseminate accurate and specific information in a timely manner to our advising colleagues in the Virginia Community College System.

In addition, faculty advisors and professional advisors face a considerable challenge by advising for three different curriculum programs simultaneously. Faculty advisors and professional advisors know that mistakes in advising can be costly and cause undue stress for our students. It is important that faculty advisors, professional advisors and our students are not only familiar with but understand any changes in the curriculum and how they may affect progress towards graduation. Even now, one year after creating the Core Curriculum, we are still trying to update materials and websites to inform our campus community and others of these changes.

Any extensive changes made for the upcoming academic year, 2010-2011, could greatly influence aspects of our advising currently in progress and registration for summer and fall. Our fall 2010 schedule and class enrollments have already been determined based on the needs of our previous general education program and new core curriculum. Students will begin enrolling in these classes on March 29th, leaving very little time for departments to make adjustments to classes if necessary due to additional changes. Moreover, extensive changes must be in place prior to the start of our new student orientation programs again leaving very little time for departments to consider the impact of changes on curriculum and make appropriate modifications if necessary.

Professional advisors value the same desirable learning outcomes as faculty: Writing, Communication, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, and Technology/Information Literacy. We know our faculty considers changes in curriculum with great seriousness and thoughtfulness.