First Year Academic Advising at IWU

At Illinois Wesleyan University, we have developed an academic advising program that takes into consideration the changing academic needs of students during their college years. In order to facilitate a successful transition from high school to university life, the first year student will work together with a qualified first year faculty advisor. The central purpose of a faculty advisor is to assist the student in academic planning and to offer advice concerning academic decisions a student must make throughout his or her undergraduate career.

A Liberal Arts University

A student’s coursework over the four-year career not only includes a major, but also a broad study of the liberal arts in general education courses. In 1850, IWU was founded as a liberal arts university, educating students across the curriculum in the social and natural sciences, the humanities, and the fine arts. The general education program at IWU is designed to foster skills and values fundamental to the liberal arts: intellectual independence, critical thinking, imagination, social awareness, and sensitivity to others.

These qualities of mind and character are developed through a coordinated academic and co-curricular program of active learning, problem solving, collaborative inquiry, and community involvement. In this environment, students pursue a course of study that leads to knowledge of the natural universe and the diverse realms of human experience.

The breadth of this liberal arts education allows students to develop interests beyond their majors, giving them the opportunities to pursue multiple interests simultaneously and explore academic areas not represented in the typical high school curricula.

The First Year Transition

During the first year as they make the transition from high school to college, students will enroll in several general education courses as well as prerequisites for the major (if they have one in mind). The first year faculty advisor guides the student into these prerequisites as well as courses that will provide optimum opportunity to begin general education coursework and explore academic areas of interest.

This early focus on the general education program helps the student at the outset develop skills and values fundamental to the liberal arts, skills and values that will enhance later academic experiences. Enrolling in general education courses also offers first year students opportunities for early exploration of a wide variety of academic areas. Although some students may enter college with a major in mind, many students do not. Exploring areas of interest through the general education program helps undecided students make informed decisions concerning major programs.

Although many students begin at IWU having already decided upon a major, as a result of academic exploration, students may discover academic disciplines that are more appropriate for their developing interests and goals. So, the advisor will help each student start to build an individualized academic plan and make appropriate adjustments to this plan should a change of interest occur in the first year.
WHO ARE THE FIRST-YEAR ACADEMIC ADVISORS?

The IWU first year advising program is linked to the Gateway Colloquium program. The Gateway courses are small classes of 15 students, designed to engage the first-year student in college-level writing, intellectual inquiry, and public discourse in preparation for a successful career at the University. Students in each Gateway course will have the same first year faculty advisor, a professor from across the IWU campus. Often the advisor will be the professor teaching the Gateway course itself.

THE END OF THE FIRST YEAR

By the end of the first year, students generally enter a less transitional phase of their academic career. Usually, the sophomore student begins taking courses in his or her major rather than preparatory courses for that major. So at the beginning of the sophomore year, the student is assigned an advisor who is a professor in the department of the chosen major. This advisor continues to work with the student, guiding and monitoring academic progress until graduation.

ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Teddy Amoloza, Anthropology and Sociology
Suzie Balser, Biology
Mary Ann Bushman, English
Chris Callahan, Modern and Classical Language and Literatures
Bruce Criley, Biology
Norma Criley, Biology
Lynn DeVore English
Zahia Drici, Mathematics and Computer Science
Lynda Duke, The Ames Library
Venus Evans-Winter, Educational Studies
Linda Farquharson, Music
Teresa Fish, Physical Education
Vickie Folse, Nursing
Sara Freeman, Theatre Arts
Doran French, Psychology
Linda French, Physics
Sonja Fritzschke, Modern and Classical Language and Literatures
Hiroko Furo, Modern and Classical Language and Literatures
Mona Gardner, Business Administration
Rebecca Gearhart, Anthropology and Sociology
Narendra Jaggi, Physics
Rachel Knepp, Biology
Sobeira Latorre, Hispanic Studies
Robin Leavitt, Educational Studies
Jim Matthews, Modern and Classical Language and Literatures
William Munro, Political Science
Carolyn Nadeau, Hispanic Studies
Leah Nillas, Educational Studies
Mauricio Parra, Hispanic Studies
Julie Prandi, Modern and Classical Language and Literatures
Chris Prendergast, Anthropology and Sociology
Matthew Pursell, History
Tari Renner, Political Science
Georganne Rundblad, Anthropology and Sociology
Michael Seeborg, Economics
Scott Sheridan, Modern and Classical Language and Literatures
Jim Sikora, Anthropology and Sociology
Gabe Spalding, Physics
Mike Theune, English
Hans-Jorg Tiede, Computer Science
César Valverde, Hispanic Studies
Mike Weis, History
Jennifer White-Reding, International Office