

Pre-Advising Undeclared Students: Recognizing the Uniqueness of Each Student



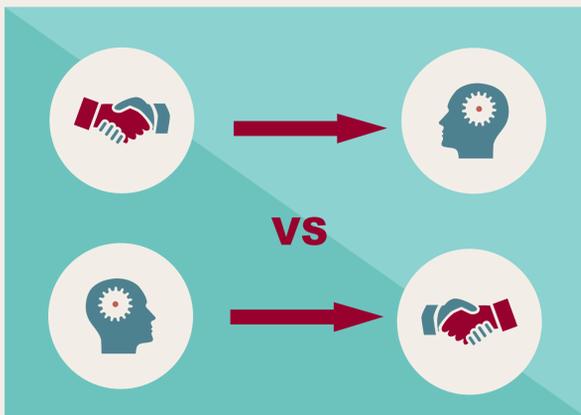
Time constraints are a reality during New Student Orientation. This has lead advisors in some disciplines to rely on group advisement. If every student in your major needs to take the same set of pre-specified courses, then advising them as a group can be a very effective use of time.



However, group advising has drawbacks. It is not the most student-centered advising practice because it does not facilitate the one-on-one conversations necessary for establishing a rapport with a student. Thus, another common solution to the time constraint problem is to pre-advise students to develop their recommended course schedule prior to meeting with them.



Pre-advisment not only saves time, it allows the advisor to take a more developmental approach in their initial meeting with a student. However, Undeclared Students come to college with a wide array of interests, abilities, and career goals. Their interests may span many different and disparate disciplines. How, then, can you pre-advise when a student is Undeclared?



Universities collect information such as test scores and incoming credit, but this does not provide the information necessary to pre-advise someone Undeclared. After all, knowing that a student received AP Biology credit does not inform you of whether they actually enjoy studying biology! In order to pre-advise an Undeclared Student, you must have accurate information regarding a student's interests and aspirations.



That is why we have developed and implemented our Undeclared Interest Form, an intake survey that provides us the information necessary for pre-advisement. Prior to implementing our Undeclared Interest Form, we had no information regarding a student's academic interests or career goals until after meeting and speaking with them at New Student Orientation. We now have students complete the form prior to New Student Orientation. This ensures that students are advised for classes that will help inform their decision regarding choice of major, in addition to providing more time with each individual student. We have also structured the form to ask the same questions in different ways, which often allows us to identify red flags and conduct early interventions.



Our goal in Undeclared Advising is for students to enroll in courses that will better inform their decision regarding choice of major. Thanks to Pre-Advisment using our Undeclared Interest Form, our students are able to use of their time effectively to discover their ideal major as soon as possible!

Please review our handouts for access to the printable and .pdf fillable versions of the Undeclared Interest Form.

