

## **Unit Policies on Advising, Counseling, and Other Student Services**

All undergraduate and advanced students are assigned an advisor, who is a faculty member in the program. The Advisement Assistance and Orientation Office provides assistance in academic advisement and choosing a major to student who have not declared a major or those needing special assistance for success at Northwest. Services are targeted toward deciding students, non-traditional, probationary, transfer, and students wishing to change majors. In addition, the office conducts faculty training and operates the Attendance Early Alert program, which connects students to University offices and services based on the student's academic or wellness needs. Any student seeking general advisement is welcome to visit the office located on the second floor of the Administration Building. Elementary candidates are advised at two levels, one before entering into the College of Education and two after being admitted to the College of Education. Students receive Secondary candidates are advised through their respective departments. Advanced students are advised through their respective departments and programs where coordinators of the programs receive faculty load credit for advising students.

The Advisement Assistance and Resource Office offers many services and resources to assist Northwest students with their academic questions and inform them of additional resources that help students decide on a major. Since 65% to 85% of all students change their majors during their university career, they can all benefit from becoming familiar with the Advisement Assistance and Resources Office early in their college career.

The office also assists faculty in their roles as advisors by evaluating the advising system, strengthening the advising process and by providing training on the institutional policies, procedures and requirements of Northwest.

In addition, Advisement Assistance organizes and facilitates all preregistration and orientation programs for incoming students. Through Transfer Preregistration and Orientation and SOAR, new students receive an orientation to our campus and register for classes with the assistance of faculty advisors.

Additional resources for advisement were put in place in 2010 with the implementation of Degree Works integrated into our Banner system. This resource can be viewed by both student and advisors to gain current information about courses which have been successfully completed and as an audit of which courses are yet to be taken

Information about advisement may be accessed at:

<http://www.nwmissouri.edu/advisementassistance/faculty.htm>.

### **For Students**

Some students have known since they were five years old the particular career they wanted to pursue. However, most decide much later and change majors and careers several times. Approximately 65% to 85% of all college students change majors at least one time during their education. In a very real sense, we are all engaged in the ongoing process of DECIDING.

Deciding is an action word. It describes some of the most dynamic opportunities available to students at Northwest Missouri State University. It means that students who are DECIDING their major are in the process of exploration. They are evaluating the interests, abilities, needs and values they possess and how they fit with a major or career.

The advising process helps the student to identify and clarify personal values, abilities, interests and goals. Students have the responsibility to engage interactively in the academic advising process. While an advisor helps by identifying and assessing alternatives and

consequences of decisions, the ultimate responsibility for making decisions about goals and educational plans rests with the student.

- only 12% of beginning students expect to change majors **65-85% do**
- only 2% of beginning students expect to fail a course **16% do**
- only 8% of students expect to take extra time to finish their degree **60% do**
- only 1% of beginning students expect to drop out 40% do

(W. Habley, cited in Upcraft and Kramer, 1995)

To read about a student's progression toward a major, view [four-year plans](#).

### **Looking For a Little Extra**

Is there a way I can find out what the Nature of the work I will be doing for a job? The Training required, or the working conditions. How about the Job Outlook and the expected earnings?

In fact there is! Try looking at [The Occupational Outlook Handbook!](#)

### **Advisement Assistance and Resource Office**

Our office conducts programs and has resources to help students decide their major. The following are some of these resources:

- [SOAR \(Summer Orientation Advisement and Registration Advantage\)](#)
- [New Student Orientation and Preregistration Program](#)
- [TypeFocus](#)
- [Exploring Majors Series](#)

### **For Faculty**

Advising is a teaching process that takes place outside the classroom. It addresses the student's entire undergraduate experience. Quality advisement must be based on the shared responsibility of the student and their academic advisor. Advisors serve as mentors, role models and career guides through their unique position as the coordinator of the undergraduate experience. Good advisors help students to realize the maximum benefits available to them and how to best obtain a quality and well-rounded educational experience.

### **Components of Successful Advising Program at Northwest**

- Proper advising is an entitlement of all students throughout their academic career at Northwest.
- A critical ingredient of student recruitment, retention and ultimately, student success.
- A developmental and at times proactive process that meets the changing needs of students through the various stages of the educational experience.
- The understanding that students have the responsibility to engage interactively in the advising process. The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about goals and educational plans rests with the student. The advisor aids by helping to identify and assess alternatives and consequences of decisions.
- An operationally decentralized advising program facilitated by the central institutional support of student services offices.
- A collaborative process and a collective responsibility. Occurring primarily between students and faculty, professional and peer advisors, but also involves other University personnel in student academic support activities.
- A responsibility shared by all faculty.
- All advisors who are positively involved in advising services should be properly trained, evaluated and rewarded.