Experience: Advising Office with Anne Young

I had a busy week in Anne’s office with a variety of projects and issues. I really got to see the complexity of an advisor’s job. On Tuesday, we had transfer orientation that lasted about 2.5 hours. We spent the morning preparing by checking the lists sent by the orientation office to see if we had any “change of majors” and to make sure all of the students who signed up to come, showed up. We gathered their paperwork and created new “planned program of study” sheets for those that were new. Before we went to the orientation, Anne showed me this GPA calculator she uses to see how many more A’s a struggling student needs to get to a 3.0 GPA. For many of them, this helps them see if it is even possible to apply to the nursing program as they need a 3.0 to do so. Anne says she rarely has to use this, but if the student doesn’t understand and needs a reality check, she shows it to them. Afterwards, she talks to them about their options of either going to another nursing program that may not have the same requirements as ours, or to change their major. During orientation, it felt great interacting with younger students as most of the students I come into contact with are a little bit older. Spending the last few weeks watching Anne and learning about the pre-nursing major really prepared me for this orientation because I was able to answer a few of the students’ questions. Students are required to sign an advising contract that lists all their responsibilities as a student. So, after the Power Point presentation, we went around and had individual meetings with the students and gathered up their contracts. We were able to answer questions and go over each student’s schedule and when they should be prepared to apply to the nursing program. After orientation, Anne wrote notes in all of the files so we have full documentation as to what happened during orientation. Anne keeps a Pre-Nursing student spreadsheet where she keeps track of all her advisees and their grades in the nursing prerequisite classes. So, I took the new transfer student information from orientation and entered their demographics and grades into the spreadsheet. Later on that day, we completed Progress Towards Degree (PTD) reports for a few athletes. Under the NCAA rulings, athletes must meet certain academic benchmarks every semester to qualify to play their sport. The advisor has to certify that the student is in compliance and is taking the appropriate class work to graduate in a timely manner. Student athletes can often lose interest in academics when they are immersed in playing sports. Beal, Riemer, & Schroeder (2000) stated, “We do have concern that with increased commercialization of college sport, that undo status and recognition may potentially displace the priority of academics” (p.376). The researchers’ study showed men in highly commercialized sports often lack academic commitment. While we assume sport players are integrated into the campus community, these researchers believe the student athletes themselves are socially isolated. “We are not asserting that social isolation prohibits students from becoming academically committed, but we do claim that social isolation can act as a barrier” (p.376).

On Thursday, I helped Anne with some of her pre-nursing files by creating labels, and putting the files together in the appropriate order. I had to make sure there was a note sheet, a planned program of study sheet, and their advising contract in each folder. Anne showed me the Spring 2011 application spreadsheet and we went through applications and entered scores and graduates to have them ready for the committee. We are hoping the committee will meet within the next month and I believe I will be able to attend the first meeting to see how a limited access program committee makes decisions. For Spring 2011, there are 100 applications and 25 spots. Last year they only had 50 applications, so the
applications have doubled in one year. That is a lot of growth and a lot more work for an already stretched for resources department.

Anne also keeps track of those students that were conditionally admitted into the nursing program from previous semesters. These students were missing certain requirements that they needed to complete as soon as possible. Most of the time, it is a course they needed to complete. So, we went through the list and checked off those that completed their outstanding requirements and emailed those who didn’t to check up on their progress.

Anne asked me to make recommendations on how to improve the School of Nursing’s website. So, I reviewed their website and made a list of suggestions. The website needs a lot of help, but a major problem is the lack of distinction between the pre-nursing and nursing major. Anne is constantly telling her advisees that the nursing program is limited access, so when they apply to the university, they are not actually admitted to the nursing program. So, I suggested it be made clear on their website so there will be less confusion with a Pre-Nursing button and a description of what pre-nursing is and how to apply to the nursing program, etc. I made a few other suggestions that can be found on the attached document.

Marianne Rodgers, Anne’s supervisor and director of nursing, happened to come into our office to ask Anne about the nursing program requirements in the Catalog, so I was able to meet her and help with the Catalog entry. We decided it would be best to lay out the new requirements clearly in the Catalog so there is no confusion. Because students have choices in classes, it was best to show that in the Catalog, because the Catalog is really a contract with the student about the courses they need to complete to get their degree. So, after we discussed that, we showed her my website recommendations and she agreed with them and wanted to ask the dean’s permission to get a Pre-Nursing button on the website. I was very excited about this and happy that my suggestion could make an impact on the department.

**Standards:** Standard 3: Managing the Learning Environment & Standard 7: Technology

Standard 3 is reflected in this activity because I was involved in a variety of jobs that helped manage the advising office environment. I learned how Anne manages her transfer students during orientation and got to help manage the School of Nursing website information. All of these tasks require a leader to step up and take charge. It was a great experience to be a part of it all.

Standard 7 is reflected in this activity because I was able to make website recommendations for the School of Nursing. I was able to give an outsider’s point of view and also take my knowledge of website design to help implement some changes to their website.

**References**