

HANDBOOK FOR FACULTY ADVISERS

A. THE FACULTY ADVISER

At The College of Wooster, all academic advising is done by members of the faculty, and the adviser-advisee relationship is among the most important relationships a student will form. The adviser assists the advisee in the construction of the academic program in a number of important ways: by providing information about requirements, policies, procedures, and educational options; by assisting students in planning a program that is consistent with their interests and abilities; and by helping students to integrate the resources of the College to meet their educational needs and aspirations. Although decisions about course selection and construction of their program are ultimately the responsibility of the student, the adviser provides an essential resource.

For entering students, the faculty adviser is also the student's instructor in First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry; as such, the adviser will have special insight into the student's background and interests, goals and needs, strengths and weaknesses. When the student declares a major, a new adviser is assigned who will help to introduce the student into the discipline as a professional, socialize the student into the culture of the department or program, mentor the student closely in the development of an appropriate academic program, and look for special opportunities that will help the student to grow both as a major in the discipline and as a liberally educated person. When the student undertakes the senior project in Independent Study, the adviser will work extremely closely with the student and mentor his or her final development as a student-scholar in the discipline and to prepare the student for graduation. The adviser will also counsel the student and offer assistance as he or she plans for life and a career after Wooster.

In our relationships with our advisees, we serve as agents of the institution. In this capacity, we must fairly and accurately interpret the academic rules and expectations of the institution to the student. At the same time, we also serve as the student's advocate. In this capacity, we must be sensitive to each student's background, needs, talents, and personality and work with each student to identify the program of academic and co-curricular experiences that will be most beneficial. We must also use our experience and judgment to help the student through the bureaucratic and procedural complexities which are part of every academic institution.

B. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

It is essential that the faculty adviser become thoroughly familiar with the rules, policies, and curriculum of the institution as described in the *Catalogue*. Advisers are encouraged to study the *Catalogue* carefully, in particular the sections on Degree Requirements and Registration, and to regard the *Catalogue* as a first point of reference in their conversations with advisees.

1. The adviser supervises the academic program of the advisee. The responsibilities of the adviser include the following:
 - a. assisting students in elucidating goals and values;
 - b. helping students to understand the nature and purpose of a liberal arts education;
 - c. providing information about requirements, policies, procedures, and educational options;

- d. assisting their students in planning a program that is consistent with their interests and abilities;
- e. helping students to integrate the resources of the College to meet their educational needs and aspirations;
- f. increasing advisees' awareness of abilities and talents through the use of test results and other data (advisers can refer advisees to Career Services for such tests);
- g. assisting advisees to plan each semester's program of courses, using the Graduation Requirement Worksheet;
- h. directing students in academic difficulty to the appropriate campus resource;
- i. being aware of each advisee's progress by sufficient contact and the keeping of accurate records; and
- j. monitoring and evaluating one's own effectiveness as an adviser.

2. Advisers should be aware of the following limitations on their advising responsibilities.

- a. An adviser should not make decisions for an advisee, but be a sympathetic listener, direct the student to appropriate resources, offer various alternatives for the student to consider, and recommend what in his or her judgment is the best decision or course of action. Students themselves, however, make final decisions about their education and their academic program, and the final responsibility for these decisions is theirs.
- b. An adviser is not expected to have detailed information about all departments, programs, and requirements at the College. The adviser is expected to check the information provided to advisees for accuracy and, as necessary, to direct the student to other sources that can provide accurate information and definitive answers to specific questions. It is the student's responsibility to take advantage of such counsel and these resources.
- c. An adviser should not betray a student's confidence. This should not preclude exchange of helpful information between adviser and instructor or the deans. Such exchanges should always be conducted in a professional and discrete manner.