Advisement Push & Celebrating Success

Spring term is well underway, and we are working hard to get students to go to advisement and register for classes. Towards that end, this edition discusses some changes underway in our advisement and enrollment practices as well as the reasons behind those shifts. In this issue, we also highlight the student ambassador program in Social Work, which cultivates leadership and peer mentoring. Finally, our upcoming Undergraduate Symposium provides an avenue for the community to see the exceptional research being done by students throughout the University and celebrate this important facet of student engagement. Read on for more details and additional tidbits on student success work!
Advisement is one of the most critical components of improving “student success” – in this case, that refers to their ability to stay on track to degree, to be aware of resources that can support their persistence, and to make important decisions on topics such as their time management and campus involvement. Historically, we have advised in widely varying ways at USM and few resources have been available to support advisors campus-wide. In addition, students sometimes do not show up for advisement when they should, then many do not register at their first opportunity to do so, even if they have been advised. The reasons for students not registering immediately include legitimate obstacles such as financial blocks and waiting for completion of current coursework to see next steps; for hundreds of students each term, however, the main reason is that they just haven’t gotten around to it. Once they leave their advisement appointment, it slips their minds.

For spring 2018, we are making changes to advisement practices to: 1) Provide more information to advisors and students; 2) encourage students to be more proactive and self-educated about their degree paths; and 3) align advisement appointments with registration windows. Open enrollment will be available from March 5 - May 15, and students should get advised during this window and leave the appointment registered for classes.

In spring 2018, students are receiving a series of seven targeted emails regarding different aspects of advisement and registration (e.g., using SOAR, clearing holds), and they are directed to the student advising resources on the Student Success page each time. Information has also been circulated as well through other means (see slides on the next page). For faculty and staff advisors, the Office of the Provost has also worked with iTech to build out a new “tile” on the SOAR homepage (see box below) to provide easy access to helpful advisement tools. Other resources can be found on the on the Student Success website, including key forms and a referral guide for common student issues.

**ADVISEMENT RESOURCES for FACULTY & STAFF**

When you log into SOAR, you will now see a second tile, labeled “Advising Resource Center.” When you click on that, it will open the menu you see on the bottom right. Please familiarize yourselves with these tools, as there are some new ones, including:

* **Advising notes**: You can make notes in SOAR regarding advisement given to students, including referrals or classes. Note that your comments will be seen by others with advising roles as well as the student.

* **Student Profile**: This handy page pulls together a wide range of information about the student, from background factors (e.g., ACT, hometown) to academic performance (e.g., interim and term grades for each semester). We hope you find it helpful and efficient in your advisement of students.
**Key Advisement and Schedule Information for Students**

Students have received tiered communication via email, group announcements, and other methods to explain the new schedule to them and encourage them to get advised and enroll in a timely fashion. Here are two slides that have been shared widely with students.

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### Advisement is here!

**Ready to register for summer and fall?**

- **February 27:** Summer and fall schedules can be seen in SOAR.
- **March 5:** Open enrollment starts

**Questions?** See the emails from Dr. Miller, talk to your advisor, or complete the “Ask An Advisor” form on the Registrar’s page.

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### New Schedule for Fall!

- **Shorter semesters and longer breaks** – fall semester classes start 8/29 and end in early December!
- **More intersession courses will be available** (full courses offered between regular semesters, in August, January, and May).
- **More options to take classes on Monday/Wednesday and not just Tuesday/Thursday or Monday/Wednesday/Friday.**

#### Fall 2018 Meeting Patterns

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular Session Courses</th>
<th>MWF Meeting Pattern</th>
<th>MW Meeting Pattern</th>
<th>TTH Meeting Pattern</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Night classes meet one night a week from 6:30-9:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>MWF Meeting Pattern (GEC/Lower Division)</td>
<td>MW Meeting Pattern</td>
<td>TTH Meeting Pattern</td>
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<td>8:00-9:00</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session I and Session II Courses (8W1/8W2)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MW Meeting Pattern</td>
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A signature spring event at Southern Miss, the 2018 Undergraduate Symposium on Research and Creative Activity (UGS), is scheduled for Saturday, April 21. Cohosted by the Honors College and the Drapeau Center for Undergraduate Research, and supported by many university and community partners, the UGS is an important venue for undergraduate students from across campus to showcase their research and creative achievements.

The symposium features dozens of oral and poster presentations, a Creative and Performing Arts Showcase and a closing ceremony in which, thanks largely to the generosity of Southern Miss alum Mr. Don Drapeau, thousands of dollars in prize money are awarded to deserving young scholars. A highlight of the UGS is the keynote address, which features distinguished Southern Miss alums who discuss how undergraduate research shaped, inspired, and fueled their careers. This year’s keynote address will be delivered by USM alumna Dr. M. Katharine Holloway, whose research on virus inhibitors, conducted in the course of a 30-year career, has saved countless lives.

Support for undergraduate research, a high impact best practice that promotes student persistence and success, has a long tradition at Southern Miss. We know that experiences like the UGS help build confidence that students will take with them after they graduate, whether they go on to post-secondary study or enter the workforce.

Of course, at the heart of the UGS are the students who submit their work for presentation. Last year’s UGS featured more than 130 student presenters; we hope for even more in 2018. Whether freshman or senior, polymer scientist or dancer, the UGS planning committee hopes students across campus will participate.

Abstracts are due on March 5 (5pm); find everything you need, including the submission portal, on our website.
Social Work Ambassadors Program

NEW STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS IN SOCIAL WORK

The School of Social Work Ambassadors was started this past fall in an effort to incorporate student leaders into recruitment, retention, and mentorship efforts within the program and the university. After a rigorous application process, six exemplary students were selected from across both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Park campuses to serve as the first class of Social Work Ambassadors. These students are a group of good citizens and leaders, committed to promoting the School of Social Work and Southern Miss to current and prospective students.

Social Work Ambassadors completed a training during the fall semester shortly after selection to the program, and they now assist with on- and off-campus recruitment events, as well as contributing to projects related to service and leadership. Our School of Social Work Ambassadors are well-versed on all department academic requirements and are committed to their own and other students’ academic success. With their strong communication skills, the Ambassadors have assisted with outreach to local high schools and community colleges; they also attend college fairs, speak in classrooms, and maintain contact with all prospective students who have shown interest in Social Work.

Alongside their recruitment duties, these Ambassadors enhance their own leadership skills through workshops through the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement. The Ambassadors were recently approved to become an official student organization at Southern Miss, to help highlight their visibility to other students who might want to join. We are proud of this group of students and anticipate that both interest in Social Work and our Ambassador program will continue to grow.

Interested in learning more?
Please contact the faculty advisor for the Ambassadors, Rachel Lahasky, clinical instructor of Social Work at rachel.Lahasky@usm.edu or 601-266-6952.
Did you know?

The Office of Leadership and Student Involvement
STUDENT LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS
SPRING 2018 • THAD COCHRAN CENTER 214 • 3-4 P.M.

FEBRUARY 20
WHAT’S NEXT?
SOAR to the next level. Discover the GPS for entry into a career or graduate school.

MARCH 27
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND LEADING IN A PEER SETTING IN COLLEGE
Involvement Ambassadors will help you figure out ways to help with conflict management and being leader of an organization while in college.

APRIL 18
IMPOSTER SYNDROME
Defining and Interrupting the Imposter Syndrome: A look at the condition of feeling like a fraud because of an inability to internalize success and a feeling of incompetence. Tips to understand barriers to this internalization and how to increase feelings of competence.

KEY ACADEMIC DATES
March 5 - May 15: Open enrollment period for current students
March 12-16: Spring Break Holidays
April 5: Last day for students to drop a full-term course with a W
May 11: Hattiesburg Commencement
May 14: Semester grades due
May 21: First Orientation for fall 2018
May 14- June 1: Summer Intersession

Students can download the Pocket Points app to earn points by locking their phones during class. Earned points can then be redeemed for online purchases or discounts at local restaurants. After downloading the app, Southern Miss students should enter the code “SMTTT” to get bonus points. Local businesses can also contact the company to be added to the program.

TEACHING FORUM
Tuesday, March 27, 9:30-10:30a.m.
Center for Faculty Development (IC 319)

This second Teaching Forum of the term will focus on “Teaching Creative and Critical Thinking.” Attendees will hear about strategies for getting past the buzzwords of “critical thinking” or “creative thinking” to learn practical ways to cultivate deeper student work.

Panelists include:
- Kelly Lester, Dance
- Webb Parker, Music
- Holly Huye, Nutrition & Food Systems

Register here to attend!