

VII. ACADEMIC ADVISING SERVICES

A. OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC ADVISING SERVICES

Accurate academic advising is of the utmost importance to the success of every student desiring to complete a degree. The professional staff and faculty who serve as advisors, therefore, will bear considerable responsibility.

The student and the advisor can establish an important relationship as the student progresses through his or her academic program. An effective and knowledgeable advisor can also provide solutions for students who have academic problems and can offer valuable suggestions to students who need help with classroom activities, such as note-taking and test-taking. The rapport between an advisor and a student often can be the factor that enhances the student's progress toward success.

Academic advising at the PMU will be critical because the curricula of the various degrees are rigid. Students will have the option of selecting a certain number of electives, and advisors must be well-trained in order to assist them in making wise decisions. However, within their majors, students will follow prescribed programs of study. These highly structured programs will provide little opportunity for students to change their majors outside of their colleges. In some cases, even changes within a college can create the need for students to take extra courses. From the beginning of a student's university career, advisors therefore must be able to distinguish between the subtleties of the majors and be able to explain the flexibility and inflexibility of programs. In order to assist students fully, advisors must be readily available for meetings and consultation.

Academic advisors will be responsible for many students whose backgrounds and abilities may be quite diverse. Therefore, the advisor must be able to adjust to each student's needs, recommend the proper balance of courses, suggest techniques for success, and track those students who are showing signs of academic weakness, and evidenced by poor grades and weak study habits.

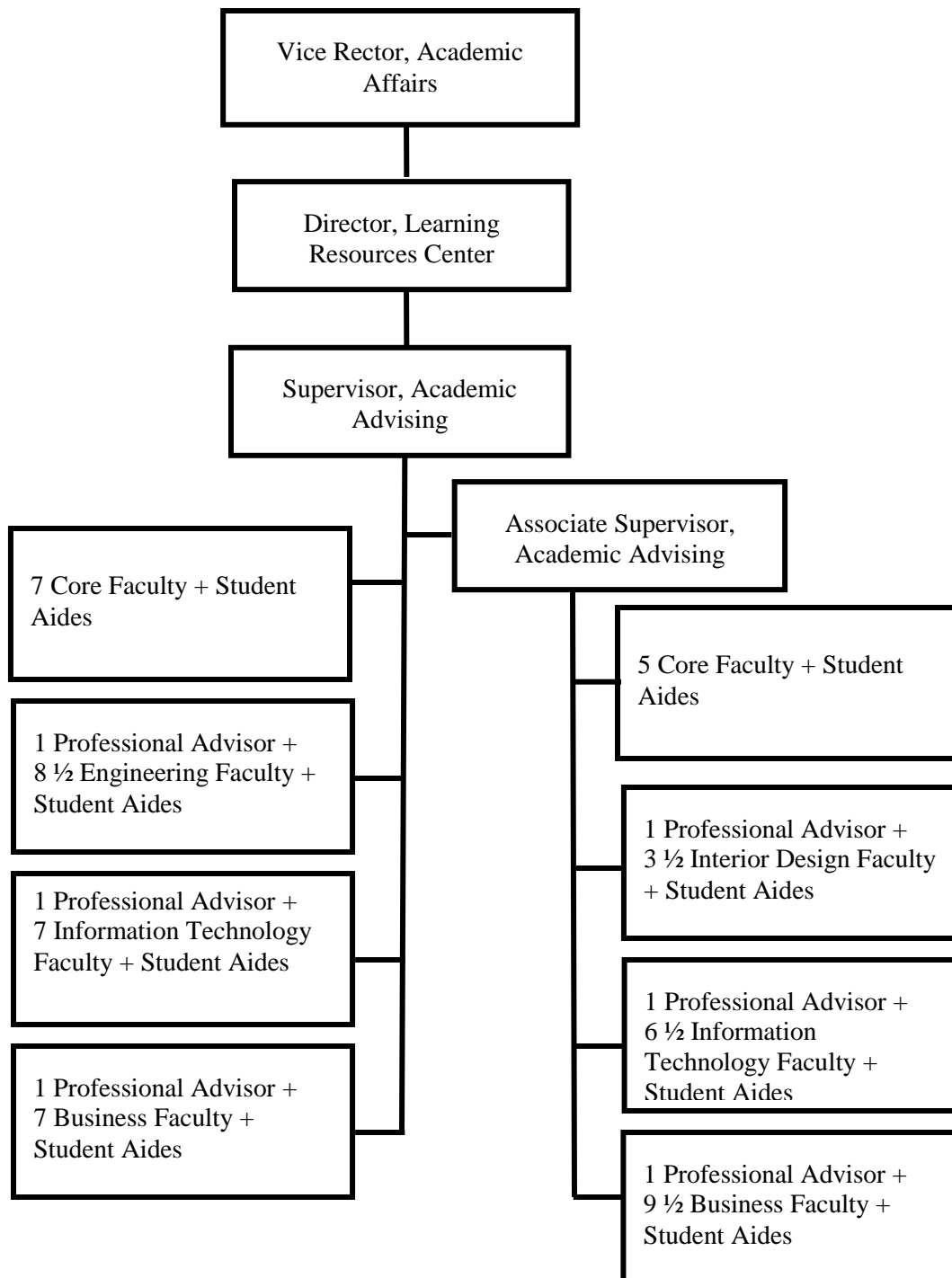
B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Place in the University Structure

Though student advising is sometimes placed under the jurisdiction of a university's department of student affairs, it is the recommendation of this report that at the PMU advising be organized under the Learning Resources Center (LRC). This will emphasize the academic nature of advising and strengthen ties to the colleges and their majors. The recommended use of faculty advisors to work in conjunction with professional advisors reinforces the need for student advising to be placed both administratively and physically with academic functions.

The heads of this function, therefore, would be titled Supervisor of Academic Advising (for male students) and Associate Supervisor of Academic Advising (for female students). They would report to the Director of the Learning Resources Center and, through him, to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs.

The structure of the Office of Academic Advising Services can be represented in the following organizational chart.



This chart is a portion of the chart presented in the final report *PMU Learning Resources Center*. Academic advising is one of the two major LRC functions beyond traditional library services that are designed to enhance the learning experience of PMU students. The other of these functions is Learning Enrichment Services, which operates the Reading Center, Writing Center, and Math Center to provide additional help to students in their academic subjects.

The complete integration of Academic Advising Services with other LRC functions is fully described in the final report *PMU Learning Resources Center*. For easy reference, Section VII, Academic Advising Services, of this final report, *Student Support Services*, is provided as an appendix to the LRC report.

2. Supervisor and Associate Supervisor of Academic Advising

The Supervisor of Academic Advising will be responsible for coordinating academic advising for all undergraduate students. He will have direct supervision for the advising of male students. Working closely with the supervisor, the Associate Supervisor of Academic Advising will have direct supervision for the advising of female students.

The supervisor and associate supervisor must know the curricula of all majors and must be the resource persons for any questions concerning academic advising. They will consult with the appropriate deans and department chairs concerning the various curricula. Each will monitor the progress of academic advising and keep accurate data on the effects of various advising procedures.

The supervisor and the associate supervisor must be individuals who are able to deal with students in a pleasant manner.

Additionally, the supervisor will be responsible for training the advisors and keeping updates on course offerings and classes. He will determine the parameters of the advising functions of both the professional and faculty advisors.

The supervisor will devise a suitable evaluation instrument to determine the effectiveness of the advisors. (See Appendix E for a sample evaluation form to be filled out by students following an advising session.) The supervisor will monitor the advising loads of both the professional and faculty advisors in order to determine the effectiveness of advising and its impact on retention. He will consult with administrators concerning steps that need to be taken to help students in academic trouble.

The supervisor must be continually aware of changes in technology and specifically advising programs that can benefit both the university and the students.

Other responsibilities of the supervisor could include developing a working budget that reflects the ambition and integrity of the advising program.

Both the supervisor and associate supervisor might serve on appropriate committees as requested by the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, create and present workshops and other programs for the education of students, work directly with the offices of admissions to develop promotional materials and brochures needed to support the university's mission, and communicate with other universities to enhance recruiting and retention efforts.

The Supervisor and Associate Supervisor of Academic Advising should hold a Master's degree (Doctorate preferred) in student affairs, counseling, or related field. Each should be capable of fluently writing and speaking in English.

C. PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS AND FACULTY ADVISORS

1. Determining the Type Required

Professional academic advisors and faculty advisors each have advantages and disadvantages. As a result, a combination is the best arrangement. However, because each college at the university has distinct missions and goals, the PMU should consider a number of questions before making its final decision.

- Will faculty members have the appropriate time to spend with students in order to be effective advisors?
 - Will faculty members have other duties such as research that could hamper their advising time?
 - Will faculty members have the desire to be advisors?
 - How does the university plan to utilize the talents of the academic advisor?
 - What are the primary characteristics of a good and effective faculty advisor?
 - How will faculty advisors be compensated? Will they receive release time from teaching duties or will they be paid a stipend?
- Will professional advisors have the broad knowledge of classroom activities and academic background to help students in many ways?
 - Will professional advisors know enough about the content of courses to help students make decisions about electives?

- Will professional advisors know enough about how students interact in certain courses to establish study groups?
- Will professional advisors have the authority to talk with relevant faculty about course offerings?
- Will professional advisors be able to establish a meaningful advisor/student relationship that will benefit the student?
- Will professional advisors be able to effectively help the student with problems not related directly to the planning of an academic schedule?

2. Qualifications of Academic Advisors

Both professional advisors and faculty advisors should possess “people skills” — that is, they should enjoy working with students, they should be aware of the problems that students face within an academic community, and they should be aware of the resources available to help students succeed.

The professional advisor will be a full-time staff person who is aware of all aspects of advising and with the curriculum for which he or she is primarily responsible. This advisor must be able to work closely with the faculty advisors and the faculty of the college. Because the professional advisor will be available at all times, he or she will be kept up-to-date on changes in the curriculum and any policy changes that could affect advising and the students.

If the advisor is the freshman advisor, he or she should have a complete knowledge of the PMU core curriculum. Beyond this, however, he or she should be familiar enough with the curricula in the major field to talk intelligently about the various options. This knowledge of the majors will be especially important during the first two years of the university when there may not be any major advisors available, or, if there are any available, there will be a limited number.

The professional, full-time advisor’s job includes analyzing and processing degree plans, maintaining student files that are updated throughout the students’ academic careers, provide retention services for students on probation, assisting with orientation sessions, and other duties assigned by the supervisor or associate supervisor.

Both professional and faculty advisors must also be aware of those courses within the freshman and sophomore years that are needed for specific majors. For example, engineering will require different mathematics courses from business, and the advisors need to make sure the students are taking the correct courses. Laboratory

sciences are another area within the core curriculum that can be specific for certain majors. The advisor must make all efforts to ensure the student is on the correct track.

When the student has academic problems, the advisor should be able to direct him or her to the resource area to get help. Through its Learning Enrichment Services, the Learning Resources Center will be able to help with reading and writing English, with mathematics, and with study skills.

Finally, the academic qualifications of the faculty advisors must be suitable to his or her discipline. Full-time faculty with terminal degrees should have the experience and knowledge to make the best faculty advisors as long as they also have the personality and the desire to do this important work. Whether the faculty advisor is paid a stipend for advising or whether he or she receives released time from teaching is a matter for the university to determine.

Professional advisors should hold Bachelor's or Master's degree in student affairs, counseling, or related field. Each should be capable of fluently writing and speaking in English.

3. Training Academic Advisors

The supervision and training of advisors will be under the guidance of the Supervisor of Academic Advising.

Though the actual experience of advising is the best way to learn how to advise students, advisors are most effective when they have received training unique to the institution and its programs. Training of advisors at the PMU will involve two different types of advising, for core curriculum advising and academic major advising. The two will have similarities of style and approach with different emphases on information.

Training faculty to be advisors in a new university should be less difficult than training faculty in an established university, for both the core curriculum advisors and the major advisors will begin with specific courses. Any changes in either curriculum can quickly be filtered down to advisors.

The PMU also will have the advantage of an on-campus Professional Development Center. The Supervisor and Associate Supervisor will work closely with the director and staff of the center to design and deliver training programs to both professional and faculty advisors. The supervisor and associate supervisor also will work closely with deans and department chairs in designing training for advisors.

Five two-hour training sessions would be appropriate for initial training of professional advisors. This would give them the opportunity to share ideas and ask questions. These five sessions would cover the following topics:

- Specific requirements of curriculum and rationale for courses.
- Ways to balance a schedule of classes to benefit students.
- The use of the LRC's Learning Enrichment Services, including the writing, reading, and math centers. Individuals from each area should provide information to the advisors.
- Transitions from the core curriculum to major programs. Core curriculum advisors and major advisors would meet together to discuss and understand the issues involved.
- Methods and techniques for handling problems of students. These sessions would include meetings with counselors from the Department of Health Care and Counseling Services to ensure services are properly aligned and understood.

At the opening of the university, meetings of advisors should be scheduled about every two weeks. It might be beneficial to reserve a time each week for meetings. Later, the meetings could be held less frequently depending on the need. Meetings often are needed when changes are made to curricula or when some other changes occur that directly affect academic advising.

4. Types of Advisors Required

Since PMU degrees are structured in a rigid format, it is recommended that the best arrangement for advising would be a combination of faculty and professional advisors.

In the recommended plan, each college will have one full-time professional advisor who would be available at all times. During peak advising times — the beginning of the semester and the time scheduled for early registration for the next semester — faculty members will aid with advising.

Faculty advisors are especially valuable for the final junior and senior years. They should possess expertise in the major subject areas and should come from the students' disciplines. One primary advantage to this is that the advisor is familiar with the student's academic program and can explain course work and help with deficiencies the student might face.

5. Student / Advisor Ratio

No advisor should be burdened with too many advisees. Determining the maximum number therefore depends on the amount of time each advisor is expected to spend with each student. This naturally would vary with the student and his or her progress. An average amount of time required for an initial meeting with a new student, however, would typically be 30 minutes. Subsequent meetings focusing on the next semester's classes could be shorter, usually about 15 minutes. Other occasions might arise in which the student would want to see the advisor, but the times required would vary depending on the student's concern.

It could therefore be estimated that an advisor would spend an average of one hour with each student each semester.

A faculty member who spends 15 hours a week as a part-time advisor could see, at maximum, 15 students a week. Advising activity, however, will occur principally at the beginning and at the end of the semester. During the middle of the term, student needs will be met by the department's professional advisors. If a part-time faculty advisor sees students during seven weeks, typically the three weeks at the beginning of the semester and the four weeks at the end of the semester, he or she could see a maximum of 105 students. A ratio of 105:1 is not unreasonable.

6. The PMU Cycle of Advising

The anticipated freshman class at the PMU will be 700 male and 550 female students, drawn from students completing the Preparation Year Program and students admitted directly from high school into degree studies. Using the ratio of 105:1, this enrollment results in the need for six male advisors and five female advisors. Some of these faculty members can be chosen from the core curriculum faculty. Others can be faculty from the student's major who teach introductory level courses.

Students will begin working with their freshman advisors at the end of the Preparation Year Program, when they apply to admission to colleges in the university. (See Section F. Advising for the First Two Years, below.) Each will then remain with his or her freshman advisor for two years, until the end of sophomore year. At that time, the student will be assigned an advisor for the next two years from his or her academic major.

As a result of this two-year cycle, the second year will add eleven more faculty advisors (seven male, five female) to accommodate the new freshman students.

Due to attrition, faculty will have lighter advising loads when their students are sophomores than when they are freshmen. However, during the spring semester, these faculty advisors will compensate by adding to their load the Preparation Year Program students who will be their freshman advisees for the following year.

7. Total Number of Advisors Required

The number of students for each major and the formula above by which faculty members spend 15 hours a week as advisors suggest the equivalent of 54 part-time faculty advisors (29 ½ male and 24 ½ female) will be necessary to serve all students.

The figures below are based on Table B, “Enrollment Distribution Across Proposed Academic Programs by Year at Full Operation with Attrition”, from the December 3, 2004 report *PMU Implementation Plan*.

Part-Time Faculty Advisor Requirements

	Male Students	Advisors needed	Female Students	Advisors needed
Freshmen	700	7	550	5
Engineering				
Electrical Engineering	321	3		
Mechanical Engineering	321	3		
Civil Engineering	279	2 ½		
Interior Design			379	3 ½
Information Technology				
Information Technology	320	3	320	3
Computer Science	320	3	240	2 ½
Computer Engineering	122	1	118	1
Business Administration				
Accounting	160	1 ½	200	2
Finance	160	1 ½	220	2
Management Info. Systems	160	1 ½	300	3
Business Administration	240	2 ½	260	2 ½
Total Advisors		29 ½		24 ½

The total number of advisors required, therefore, would be six professional advisors (three male and three female, one assigned to each college), plus 54 faculty advisors assigned during peak times (29 ½ male and 24 ½ female).

Since the breakdown above shows a number of advisors at half time, some advisors could be assigned to two majors, or some advisors may meet with fewer students. This second option, however, would increase the total number of faculty advisors.

With a combination of professional and faculty advisors, the number of advisors a student sees during his or her university experience would remain small. The student would have one faculty advisor for the first two years and another for the second two years, available during peak activity at the beginning of the semester and at pre-registration at the end. The other, professional advisor would be available at any time. Limiting the number of advisors for each student is important. The rapport that develops between the students and their advisors can be key to developing confidence and trust.

D. THE APPLICATION OF ADVISING SERVICES

1. Introducing Students to Advising

Academic advising is so crucial to students that advisors must be ready to discuss the importance of advising to various audiences. Student orientation programs, usually facilitated by the Division of Student Services, are informational occasions when students are exposed to all facets of the university before actually beginning classes. Since students will be attending orientation programs to learn about academics and what is expected of them as students, advisors are an important group to meet with prospective students.

The Supervisor of Academic Advising should conduct sessions at the university orientation in which general information about the various academic programs is presented. This should include both common areas such as core curriculum requirements and specific areas that will differ for students — particularly mathematics and sciences — depending on the majors they have chosen. It is imperative that students understand that once they begin a particular major they will have some difficulty changing majors, particularly from one college to another.

The parents of prospective students also need to understand the course work their sons and daughters are taking. Parents tend to ask questions more freely than do students. Individual advisors can help answer these concerns and give the parents confidence that the advisors can safely direct their students into the correct classes. Sessions with parents can help them understand the scope of the curriculum.

Counselors at high schools expected to produce PMU students also may be an audience for expressing the importance of advising. These individuals influence students about universities and degrees offered. Because PMU is going to be patterned after American universities, this distinguishing characteristic can be a selling point for PMU. If feasible, it might be beneficial to invite counselors from several high schools to come to campus and receive information about the curricula for the various fields of study.

2. PMU Advising Centers

a. Location

The Supervisor and Associate Supervisor of Academic Advising should be physically located in Learning Resources Center to facilitate interaction and cooperation with their peers in Learning Enrichment Services and with their supervisor, the Director of the Learning Resources Center. Because student advising at the PMU will be recognized as an academic function, however, the offices of individual advisors should be located in the academic colleges they serve.

The clusters of offices that occur on the first and second floors of the college buildings would be appropriate locations for both full time and academic advisors. Each professional advisor could be located with his or her faculty counterparts in the college they serve. Locating advisors together in an area designated as an Advising Center will make meetings convenient for students and will encourage interaction among advisors.

Alternatively, if the university wishes to locate advising services on the ground floor, offices may be used in the spaces titled “Student Center” on the Zuhair Fayeze Plans of academic buildings.

The ground floor arrangement has the advantage of an already-designed lounge area where students can wait for their meetings with advisors. Locating a waiting or reception area among the first or second floor offices would require some redesign of spaces. However, the “Student Center” spaces are large enough to accommodate only the professional advisors. This location also would remove them from the colleges they serve. In this scenario, faculty advisors would be located elsewhere in their respective colleges.

b. Atmosphere

The ambiance of the Advising Centers is very important, as this may be the first place a prospective student goes for information. A reception area should contain comfortable furniture for the student and his or her family and friends. Literature about the university should be readily available as well as information about the various academic programs and services of the university.

Advising centers also should make full use of technology. The university may wish to develop software that would link its advising centers to academic areas such as the Learning Resources Center or to Student Services areas such as career services. A common access to all support services can benefit students by simplifying and encouraging use of university resources. Placing kiosks in advising centers and at other key locations throughout the university, or giving students wireless access to support services through their laptop computers, would give information to students about all facets of the university. The use of technology in advising and student services would be a key component of the university's technology infused environment.

c. Personnel and Scheduling in the Centers

The professional advisors will be on duty in the advising centers throughout the day and throughout the semester. Faculty advisors will devote a certain number of hours to advising in the center during the weeks at the beginning and end of the semester that are designated peak times. During these periods, fifteen hours a week for faculty advisors would be a reasonable schedule, with the average of three hours a day. Students may see advisors by appointment, or the center can designate times when advisors will see "walk-in" traffic without appointments.

Each advising center also will be staffed by a number of student assistants throughout the day. Students will make appointments with advisors and help students with basic scheduling problems and class information. If Advising Centers are located in individual colleges rather than the common "Student Center" areas that serve multiple colleges, student assistants should be enrolled in one of the majors in that particular college. If Advising Centers are located in the common "Student Center" areas, they should represent each of the university's colleges.

3. Information Brochures about the Various Majors

It is extremely important for the Advising Centers to have brochures about majors and other materials on hand at all times for use in informing students. These brochures should be brief but informative. They should provide relevant information that will assist the student in understanding programs. The brochures should include the following:

- Pictures that show students involved in the majors
- Qualifications needed for admission into the program
- Basic requirements for the degree
- Possible job opportunities for graduates
- Information about the faculty
- Distinctive features of the program

These brochures should be available to prospective students as well as students currently enrolled in the Preparation Year Program or their freshman year of university studies. Advisors in specific areas should be available to talk with prospective majors about their programs.

In keeping with technology infused environment of the PMU, each major also should have an attractive Web site that includes more detail about the program. Technology can be utilized to attract prospective students to the university. It also can ensure that advisors have immediate access to the information they need for assisting students.

E. THE INITIAL ADVISING SESSIONS

1. The First Advising Session

The first session between advisor and student should last 30 minutes. If the student has come with his or her parents, they should be invited to be part of the session, for many parents will be unaware of the curriculum. Since PMU is academically organized in the manner of an American university, then the structure of the freshman year's courses and the core curriculum courses may be completely new to the parents as well as the student. The advisor must be able to talk about the curriculum and be able to answer questions that might arise. For example: For a student who plans to study electrical engineering, there might be no reason to question the need for proficiency in English, but a question might arise about course requirements in social and behavioral sciences. Students, parents, and advisors all would benefit from literature that describes the first two years and major studies at the PMU.

Advisors also need to talk about the careful balancing of a class schedule. The student will best know his or her strengths and weaknesses in academics. However, academic programs have many other aspects of which students may not be aware. For example:

- Prerequisites must be taken first.
- Certain majors require particular mathematics courses.
- Majors require specific grade point averages for advancing to the next level.
- Many courses are offered only one time each year.

Occasionally students will be accompanied by parents who dominate the advising session by doing much of the talking for their son or daughter. The advisor, however, can still focus his or her attention on the student. It is not uncommon for the parent to insist on one major for the student but for the advisor to sense that the student does not want to pursue that course of study. To avoid creating anxiety between parents and child, the advisor can invite the student to another session once classes have begun to talk about his or her progress. At the close of the first advising session, the advisor should schedule a second advising session with the student about three or four weeks into the semester.

2. The Second Advising Session

The second advising session with the student can be very productive. By this time, the student has settled into the university and this meeting can be conducted on a friendly basis. The student's progress can be discussed and the advisor can ask about the student's classes. If the parents appeared overbearing at the first session, this can be discussed and the advisor can talk with the student about his or her goals in life. If the major suggested by the parents is not what the student desires, this will become the focus of the session, even though no changes in major needs to be made officially at this time. This second session can establish more firmly a positive rapport between advisor and student.

F. ADVISING FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS

During the five years required for the members of the initial entering class to complete their courses of study at the PMU and the seven total years required for the university to reach its full enrollment, Academic Advising Services will grow and become an even more viable asset for the students and the university.

1. Preparation Year Program

a. Need for Preparation Year Advisors

During the Preparation Year Program, students require minimal advising. Placement tests determine the level of English courses they take, and all students take the same learning skills courses and the same first semester of math. Their only choice, and the only occasion when students may need advising on course selection, occurs at the end of the first semester, when they select the math course for the second semester. At this time, they select one of two courses, depending on their intended major.

At the end of the second semester, students who have successfully completed the Preparation Year Program apply to admission to one of the three PMU colleges. It is anticipated that when the university is at its full operation, 480 males and 434 females will advance each year from the Preparation Year Program to degree studies. (See Table B, "Enrollment Distribution Across Proposed Academic Programs by Year at Full Operation with Attrition", from the December 3, 2004 report *PMU Implementation Plan*.) Using the student/advisor ratio of 105:1 presented above, these numbers will require five male advisors and four-and-a-half female advisors.

b. Source of Preparation Year Advisors

To serve students leaving the Preparation Year Program, it would be beneficial to have faculty advisors available from both the core curriculum and from academic majors available. Faculty advisors from the majors will be especially helpful as students apply to the university's colleges.

At this point, the faculty will perhaps serve more as consultants to the students than actual advisors, but their role should not be diminished. All majors except those in the College of Business Administration have major course requirements freshman year, so the faculty teaching those courses would be the best consulting advisors. These faculty members are likely to have knowledge of advanced courses and can also help students understand the progression of classes and prerequisites.

2. Freshman Year

a. Choice of Freshman Advisors

When students advance from the Preparation Year Program to PMU degree studies, they make application to one of the three colleges of the university. (For details on admissions processes, see the report *PMU Admissions Plan*.) With the exception of Interior Design, however, most students do not necessarily declare a major at this time. A student entering the College of

Business Administration, for example, would not yet be committed to studying one of the majors: finance, accounting, business administration, or management information systems.

During this year, most students take introductory major courses, which are required of all students in their college. The bulk of their freshman coursework, however, comes from the core curriculum. Sophomore year sees an increase in the major courses, but still a large number of Core Curriculum courses. The faculty of the Core Curriculum, therefore, would be the best choice for advisors for the first two years of study.

Since all freshmen students will be enrolled in a college, there will be no need for professional advisors to serve freshmen as a distinct group. The professional advisors assigned to a college will serve that college's freshmen. If the work load of professional advisors becomes too great as the PMU grows, the university may choose at a later date to add professional advisors to serve only freshmen.

b. Role of Freshman Advisors

Establishing a rapport with students at the outset of their academic careers can be a positive influence on the students. This will lead to a smooth transition for entering a third year that focuses sharply on their majors.

In meetings to discuss academic programs with beginning students, advisors should demonstrate how to construct a schedule that benefits the student most. When meeting with the student initially, the advisor can evaluate the academic background and the academic desires of the student. It is important that each student understands his or her degree program. A useful tool for presenting programs and helping them easily understand the sequence of requirements is a color-enhanced course listing. A sample listing covering the PMU Core Curriculum is presented as Appendix F of this report.

c. Course Selection in Freshman Year

Because of the need to satisfy Core Curriculum requirements at the beginning of the academic career, students will not need to select a major within their college until the end of Freshman Year. However, advisors must make students aware that there are certain courses within the Core Curriculum that are requirements for programs in the colleges. The advisor must make the student aware of necessary decisions and the urgency of making important choices.

For example, during the first semester of the freshman year, all engineering students will be taking Introduction to Engineering, all Information Technology students will be taking Computer Science I, and all Interior Design students will be taking Introduction to Interior Design and Interior Design I. If a student decides to change his or her major after the first semester, there will not be too much of an impact on additional course work (unless these classes are only offered during the first semester), but additional specific courses are required in these majors during the second semester of the freshman year; only business administration majors begin their specific major coursework in their sophomore years. There are also specific courses in mathematics and science required for all majors that are expected to be taken during the freshman year.

If the family wishes, it is appropriate that parents be allowed to attend the initial advising session. Many times parents may not be aware of the details of an academic program. The advisor must stress to both the student and the parent, however, that the curriculum for each major is rigid and that after the first year of study, changing to another major could result in an extra year of coursework.

3. Advising the Core Curriculum

The PMU core curriculum includes a large number of both required and elective courses. To assist students in their selections, advisors should have available a handout sheet that summarizes the courses on one page and provides a table in which students can write the courses they select.

a. University Core Courses

All students must take ten courses (34 hours) from the University Core Curriculum, and eight of these courses must be completed by the end of the sophomore year. These include: four courses in communication (12 hours), three in PMU core competencies (6 hours), two in physical education (2 hours). Courses in Arabic language (7 hours) and Islamic studies (7 hours) must be taken for seven consecutive semesters. Advisors need to stress the importance of communication in all areas of the student's work. Professors will expect students to be proficient in both written and oral English as well as to be prepared for research.

b. Mathematics Courses

Nine mathematics courses are currently listed for the degrees offered. Although only six hours are required for the core curriculum, additional math courses are required for all majors except Interior Design. Advising for mathematics can be complicated, because requirements can vary depending on the major pursued. Additionally, if students decide to change their majors to another college after they have taken specific math courses, they will have to take additional courses, unless the college is willing to make substitutions.

For example, all students majoring in programs in the College of Business Administration must take Finite Mathematics for Students of Business (MATH 1311) and Calculus for Students of Business (MATH 1312) in their freshman year. These courses then lead to a third math course required in the second year — Statistical Methods (MATH 1313). These courses are taken almost exclusively by students in business, so a student changing from a business program to any engineering program or two of the three information technology programs would have to take Calculus I, II, III and Differential Equations. With the high number of credit hours designated in each program for each semester, students would have difficulty scheduling these classes. Another problem could occur if these mathematics courses are prerequisites for higher level courses in major fields. As a result, students must be advised very carefully. Any students who are in doubt about their major may have to alter have their freshman year schedules.

c. Science Courses

Degrees in both the Colleges of Information Technology and Engineering require specific natural science courses. IT requires two semesters of physics and an additional science and Engineering requires different combinations of physics and chemistry.

Knowledge about the curriculum's final years is necessary for advisors, as they must be able to talk intelligently about the programs. But the advisors will not need to have detailed knowledge about the content of specific courses. This information can be provided by the faculty who will be advisors in the students' third and fourth years.

G. SELECTING MAJORS AND CHANGING MAJORS

Many students will have already chosen their majors when they enroll in the PMU. However, it is likely that some of them will change their minds for a variety of reasons. Students need to be aware of the consequences of changing their majors as far as degree specific requirements are concerned.

1. Students Undecided About Their Majors

Many times students are unsure of their majors when they enroll in a university. Since the curriculum for all majors at the PMU are strictly structured, students will need to decide by at least the end of their freshman year what their majors will be. Since only a few courses are taken for specific majors during the freshman year, there is opportunity for substitutions within the core for students who are undecided. Advisors will be needed to determine the best course of action for these students and warn them about getting too far behind with math and science requirements unique to certain majors.

2. The Need to Choose Core Courses Carefully

All students at the PMU are required to take eight hours of physical sciences. The choices are Introductory Biology, Introductory Chemistry, Chemistry for Engineers I, Chemistry for Engineers II, Introduction to Physical Geology, Introductory Physics, Physics for Engineers I, and Physics for Engineers II. It is obvious that students going into any of the engineering majors should take the chemistry and physics courses designated for engineers; other majors choose introductory courses. However, if a student who initially intended to major in Business Administration decides he wants to switch to Civil Engineering and has not taken the proper core science courses, he will have to take those courses before progressing to courses for which those courses are prerequisites.

Entering students who decide to major in business administration should be warned about changing their majors while completing the core curriculum. This warning should also be given to majors in the engineering, because there are specific mathematics requirement for engineering majors as there are for business majors, as well as the two economics courses in the behavioral sciences.

H. ADVISING MAJORS IN THE THREE COLLEGES

1. College of Business Administration

Advisors of majors in the College of Business Administration must be alert to the classes that are only offered once a year and must guide students carefully. Students who fail courses in the majors are likely to have added semesters due to the fact that upper-level courses in particular are likely not to be offered each semester.

Students majoring in any of the four departments in the College of Business Administration begin the specific courses for their major in the second year. However, as is true with all majors, specific mathematics courses are taken during the freshman year. Additionally, majors in accounting, finance, and business administration will take the financial accounting and managerial accounting sequence in the sophomore year, while MIS major takes the accounting sequence in the junior and senior year. The MIS student takes three courses in the major during the sophomore year: the two programming for information systems courses and legal environment of business.

Students should be able to determine after taking accounting whether they are ready to major in accounting, for most jobs in accounting depend on individuals with superior accounting skills. If an accounting major finds that he or she is average in the introductory courses, it is likely that the advanced courses will be beyond the student's capability. Therefore, the student should decide to switch majors to one of the other three areas.

There are ten courses that all business majors must take, so it is likely that they will be offered every semester even though the suggested class modules specify a specific semester. The other courses required for the various majors will probably not be taught each semester, particularly the elective courses. Only Intermediate Accounting I is required of two majors (Accounting and Finance), so it is likely to be taught each semester.

It is imperative that advisors are aware of the semester in which courses are offered. Academic departments must furnish advisors with the information several semesters ahead of time so that four-year programs can be devised for students.

2. College of Information Technology

Students majoring in the three departments in the College of Information Technology begin much of their basic work in the freshman year and have unique classes in mathematics and the natural sciences. There is little leeway if any, in changing majors, even within the college.

Advising students in the College of Information Technology will be the most difficult if the projected number of students in the three departments is constant, particularly in the Department of Computer Engineering where the anticipated number for both men and women is low. In some instances, it will be impractical to have two classes of required courses offered each semester. It is also highly likely that junior and senior courses will be offered only during one semester. This will cause students in this major to have rigid schedules with little opportunity for variance. It also leaves no room for failures. Students receiving failing grades would likely have to wait until the following year to retake courses.

3. College Of Engineering

a. Engineering

Advisors must alert all students desiring to major in any of the three departments in the College of Engineering that changing their majors will be extremely difficult because of the rigid requirements. Although engineering students take a few common courses during the freshman and sophomore years, there is some variation among majors. Students must decide by the end of their third semester which engineering major they want.

Students majoring in one of the engineering areas take up to sixteen hours in their major during the freshman and sophomore years. They must take Chemistry for Engineers and Physics for Engineers as well as Calculus I, II, and III and Differential Equations. The junior and senior years for each of the three departments are quite distinct and leave no opportunity for changing majors. Advisors must be ready to tell students about the possibility of lost time if the student decides to alter his major to an area in engineering.

b. Interior Design

Advising students majoring in the Department of Interior Design should be relatively easy because the students will progress through the curriculum together. Scheduling of classes should also cause little trouble. The student / teacher ratio of 18/1 is reasonable and also should offer no problems. Perhaps the primary concern of advisors would be the specificity of the curriculum and the sequential courses. However, the motivation of students should be high so the possibility of failure is minimal.

I. STUDENTS ON PROBATION AND IN ACADEMIC PERIL

1. Reasons Why Students Encounter Difficulty

Students who fall below their college's acceptable grade point average after their first semester at the university will be placed on probation for a semester. Advisors become especially important to these students, for there can be several reasons why these students performed poorly. Among these are the following:

- They were unprepared for university work.
- They have problems taking tests.
- They lack the skill of proper note-taking in class.
- They have trouble reading textbooks and determining what is important and what is possible testing material.
- They are unsure of their futures.
- They are stressful individuals and the demands of the university add to their concerns.
- They are not used to the competition of other students.

Advisors must be ready to discuss problems with students and/or to direct them to the proper places for help. If the Learning Resource Center has sessions on stress management, time management, note-taking, and other essential needs of university students, probationary students can be directed there. Other students may be directed to the Department of Health and Counseling. The university should establish a mechanism for monitoring the progress of these students.

2. Monitoring Students in Academic Peril

A convenient and easy way for advisors to monitor the progress of students through their probationary semester is to provide grade report forms that the student takes to his or her professors for periodic grade checks and then submits to the advisor. It would be best if such a form would have spaces for the name of the course, the professors' name, a blank for the grade to that point, a section for notes or comments by the professor. A sample grade check form is attached to this report as Appendix G.

J. USING TECHNOLOGY IN ADVISING

1. Computerized Advising Programs

Not only can technology be of great benefit to academic advisors, research indicates that technology is critical to determining success of academic advising programs. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), with a membership of over 6,000 members, conducts a yearly conference that offers hundreds of

programs to academic advisors in higher education. The topics that are covered reveal the extent of advising today. Many of the sessions' content are available online: [www.nacada.ksu.edu/].

Although many universities have created their own advising software, there are many commercial advising programs available today. Among the most widely used are DARS (Degree Audit Reporting System) [<http://www.dars.muohio.edu/>], PeopleSoft [http://www.peoplesoft.com/corp/en/public_index.jsp], and SCT Banner [http://www.sct.com/Education/products/p_b_index.html].

The university must ensure that the program selected contains critical functions for advisors, students, administrators, and others. The PMU must determine which information the software should be able to process in order to effectively advise students. The PMU should select a software package that has capabilities of handling the following information:

a. Primary Information:

- Complete name of student
- Identifying student number
- Complete home address and phone
- Complete university address and phone
- Cellular phone number (if that is the easiest way to contact the student)
- Degree sought
- Student's major (if applicable)
- Current grade point average
- Classification
- Cumulative hours taken
- Name of advisor

b. Secondary Information (accessible by separate screens)

- Degree plan
 - Includes both core curriculum and major requirements
 - Structured so that courses taken will be separated from those needed.
 - Includes a page of accumulated hours, both lower level and advanced.

- For transfer students, total transferred credit breakdown.
- Registration status
 - Indicates to the advisor if any other area of the university has any kind of restriction on the student. For example, if the student’s admission forms were lacking needed information, the student would be blocked from registration until he or she had met with an admissions counselor.
 - Indicates if the student is cleared for registration.
- Student schedule
 - A listing of the current schedule as well as listing past schedules
- Transcript information
 - The student’s course listing by semester with grades and earned grade point average
 - An appended section showing the progress of completing the core curriculum.
 - For transfer students, the student’s transferred credits and transfer grade point average
- Re-admittance history
 - Information concerning any action taken by a Dean or other authority for a suspended student. For example; requirements that a certain number of hours to be taken, requirements that certain courses be repeated, requirements that the student receives aid from the Learning Resources Center.
 - After the student has conferred with the dean or authority, capability for the advisor to re-open the student’s registration account.
- Advising history
 - Information from each advising session, including date advised and advisor’s name

The program should have the ability to e-mail the student. This will enable students to receive and keep copies of course suggestions. If there is mandatory re-advising for students on probation, the software should indicate this need and indicate a date for the advising session. This record must be separate from the student’s earlier advising.

2. Online Advising

The PMU may wish to offer online advising to students who do not need to be counseled by advisors in a one-on-one advising session. Other universities who have created such programs typically promise a response to a student's e-mailed academic schedules within 48 hours. The response will contain approval of the proposed schedule, the suggestion that the student come to see an advisor, or recommending changes. For an example of a Web-based advising program incorporating these functions, visit http://universitycollege.unlv.edu/advising_exploring_majors.html

An online advising program would include input from the student in the following areas: name, student identification number, classification, and major. The program should accommodate enough entry fields for the student to submit up to eight courses including entry fields for labs and a field for questions or notes. The program should offer links to degree plan sites, the university catalog, schedules of classes, the financial office, and any other relevant sites dealing with course selection and description.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Space Requirements, Division of Student Affairs
- Appendix B: Proposed Central Student Affairs Facility
- Appendix C: Job Posting / Resume Exchange / Collection Form
- Appendix D: Health Links
- Appendix E: Advising Session Evaluation
- Appendix F: Core Requirements (Color Coded)
- Appendix G: Student Grade Check Report