

## Brainstorms at “Moving to Plan B” Workshop UCSC Winter Advising Forum, 2011

Advisers met to discuss and brainstorm possible strategies for working with students at various points of their academic careers who may find themselves ineligible for a major they hoped to pursue. The following ideas were suggested; those with asterisks were most strongly supported by the advisers in attendance.

1. How can we prepare students at the lower-division level to navigate this landscape? What advice might individual advisers or the advising system give them that would help them to connect with a major in which they will succeed?

- a. Institute an early-warning system to identify students who are not performing well, and establish an intervention. \*\*\*\*\*
- b. Offer a “University 101” 2 credit class and/or a “Major Mixer” event. \*\*\*\*\*
- c. Offer courses early in the curriculum that are “intro to the major” courses. \*\*\*
- d. Work major selection information into the core courses. \*\*
- e. Make information more accessible, and get it to students early. \*\*
- f. Make sure students have information early about admission and disqualification policies for majors. \*
- g. Make study skills resources available.
- h. Make students aware of what majors are available early.
- i. Review high school course work and grades for new frosh, to get a sense of their academic strengths.
- j. Involve faculty and department chairs in the conversation.
- k. Advise students to take pre-requisites early, and to be careful about not overloading their schedule if they are taking courses important to their progress.
- l. Utilize other students as a resource – connect junior/senior students with frosh to talk about their experience in a major.
- m. Do more outreach re: support services available.
- n. Connect students with departments earlier.

2. How can we identify students who are likely to become ineligible for the major they hope to pursue? What kind of outreach can we do to reach this population?

- a. Focus our outreach not based on what major they’re proposed in, but in specific courses – for example, do outreach to all students in Econ 1 about the economics admission policy. \*\*\*\*\*
- b. Offer a 1- or 2-credit class for undeclared students or those who are struggling (or some sort of tutorial?). \*\*\*\*\*
- c. Perhaps do group advising (Career Center?) around choosing a major. \*\*\*
- d. Identify what grades indicate that a student will be successful in a major. For example, if a student earns C’s in a particular major’s lower division courses, are they typically successful in upper division courses in that major? Look at what the grades actually mean in terms of indicators of future performance. \*\*
- e. Provide new transfer students with information about admission and disqualification policies for majors they hope to pursue.
- f. When a student is disqualified from a major, require them to meet with a college adviser or a career adviser.
- g. Look at students who repeat courses over and over trying to qualify for a major.

3. When a student becomes ineligible for their first-choice major at the upper-division level, how can we help them identify options for completing a degree?

- a. Refer to career advisers to identify majors that would be a good match. \*\*\*
- b. Offer a 2-credit class to explore the possibilities. \*\*
- c. Consider the possibility of encouraging them to transfer, if appropriate. \*
- d. Start from scratch in helping them consider their interests, skills, and how to put together a plan for a new major. \*
- e. Suggest they attend a community college and take all prerequisites for a new major, readmit when ready to declare.
- f. Each case should be considered individually – evaluate the student’s situation and the options available to him/her.

#### 4. Policy Ideas

- a. Require every division to establish a “fallback” major that does not have specific admission requirements and that students disqualified from another major could complete successfully. \*\*\*\*\*
- b. Make the math placement exam required for all new frosh. \*\*\*\*\*
- c. For majors with admission requirements, require a review of the student’s record at the time of admission (for transfer students) and let them know if they are admitted to the major. \*\*\*
- d. Create an early warning system for proposed majors who are not earning high enough grades to qualify. \*\*\*
- e. Make the major declaration deadline earlier. \*\*
- f. Consider disqualification from a major the same as disqualification from the university. \*
- g. Establish a different GPA at which a student is identified as “at risk” – for example, don’t just require students on probation to meet with an adviser, but also students whose GPA is 2.5 or lower.
- h. Require students to go through an online advising program, and put a hold on their enrollment if they don’t – like the holds that are placed for students who don’t go through the alcohol education training.
- i. Attach prerequisites to classes that are typically “road blocks” so that students are prepared by the time they take them.
- j. Standardize grades that are considered passing or failing for major admission purposes.
- k. Continued enrollment after being disqualified from a major should require the student meeting with their college and career adviser to discuss options.
- l. Limit the number of departments that can establish disqualification policies.
- m. Turn over bar/disqualification decision to departments for students declared in a major.