From Our Director

Greetings CofC Parents and Families,

It is hard to believe we are six weeks into the spring semester and on the heels of spring break. We had a very robust fall semester. Between August and December, we had 3188 advising appointment reservations with 2519 different and distinct students. This is great news because it means that students are coming in more than once to discuss their academic plans with their academic advisor. In between all of those advising appointments, we hosted the third annual Majors Fair in September as well as three Choosing a Major Workshops in collaboration with the Career Center.

As a coach for your student it is always a good idea to be aware of key deadlines: Mid-term grades are posted on Monday, March 14 and the last day to withdraw from a course with a “W” for full semester classes is Friday, March 18. The AAPC will be hosting drop-in hours between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 17 and Friday, March 18 for students who would like to discuss the pros and cons of withdrawing from or staying in a course. It is important that students make an informed decision in consultation with an academic advisor instead of merely relying on their friends’ advice or their feelings at that time. There could be numerous unknown pitfalls to withdrawing from a course without all the information including impact on scholarships and financial aid, on-campus housing or timely progress toward degree. Your student’s Academic Advisor is an incredible resource and this is why we host these drop-in hours. We want it to be as easy as possible for students to access their advisor so they can make the best decision for them. As a note, we will be sending all students assigned to our office with information about this special drop-in advising time encouraging them to take advantage of this opportunity.

During our “Transfer Advising Days” we invited transfer students to come in for their mandatory advising appointment before we invited first-year students to do the same. Thirty-eight percent of our undecided transfer students took us up on our offer to come in early. We are pleased that these students recognized the value of seeing their advisor early in the term to talk about their transition to the College of Charleston and think about their next steps in their academic journey.

We have since invited all of our first-year students to make their advising appointment for the spring. During this appointment we will discuss with students how their spring semester is progressing, their grades to date, their plans for the summer, concerns or challenges they are facing, current or future goals, and lastly course options for next fall. Students can make an appointment by stopping into our office at 247 Lightsey, calling our main line at 843-953-5981 or making an appointment through our online appointment system, Appointment Manager. As you can imagine, Appointment Manager is a very popular option for students today. Advisors’ calendars are quickly filling, so encourage your student to make their appointment early and keep it. When students come to their appointment, it is important that they are prepared. The more prepared your students is for their appointment, the more beneficial and value-filled that advising time is for your student. We are excited to be a part of their lives and offer support and advice to help them reach their goals.

Sincerely, Karen Hauschild

OUR MISSION

The Academic Advising and Planning Center (AAPC) prepares undergraduate students to navigate all aspects of academic planning by promoting an atmosphere that encourages self-exploration and resource utilization in support of academic success, as well as the timely and informed pursuit of an academic major.
The Academic Advising and Planning Center, in collaboration with the Office for the Academic Experience, the Career Center, and Student Government Association hosted the 3rd annual Majors Fair on September 29th in Stern Center Ballroom from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Close to 300 students attended this year’s Majors Fair and had the opportunity to speak one-on-one with faculty, staff, and student representatives from academic programs all over campus. Meeting in a central location allowed students to visit several academic programs and ask questions related to requirements, curriculum, and career opportunities.

All undergraduate students at the College of Charleston must declare a major no later than the second semester of their sophomore year and this decision is instrumental to their college success. Students who attended the Majors Fair were predominately undecided and exploring programs of study before declaring their major. Students considering a change in their declared major or adding a minor also attended to solicit information from program representatives. Students received important information for their academic planning as they prepared to register for Spring 2016 courses.

Students voted on their favorite table display via electronic survey. The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry was the overwhelming favorite (see picture). Their table included live chemistry experiments. They received an award and their name on a plaque that hangs in the Academic Advising and Planning Center.

This event would not have been possible without the volunteer faculty, staff, and student representatives present to provide information to our student body. Over 40 programs participated in the 2015 Majors Fair including representatives from the six academic schools and four student support offices. We thank them for their support in assisting our students in this decision-making process and we look forward to Majors Fair 2016!
Coaching Your Student
Helping Prepare your Students for Academic Success

Classes have started and soon your student will be visiting our office to discuss his or her academic plan as well as course options for the fall. Here are a few key questions you can prompt your student with as she prepares for an advising appointment:

- *Do you know who your academic advisor is?* (this is in the MyCharleston Academic Services tab);

- *Have you already scheduled your advising appointment yet?* Students need to plan to make this appointment several weeks in advance of when they think they need to have it. Many, many students schedule the appointment and then fail to keep it. This creates undue hardship on your student and the advisor. As the semester progresses, advisor schedules are booked with appointments and it becomes virtually impossible to reschedule quickly.

- *Have you reviewed your degree audit in Degree Works?* This is an excellent online tool, again located in the Academic Services tab in MyCharleston, allowing students to look at their academic progress to date and create “What If” audits to explore options for a major or minor.

- *Have you identified and selected a major/minor or both? If yes, have you declared your major yet?* Have you identified “go to” faculty and staff in your intended department? Have you accessed the Program of Study worksheets or Roadmaps online? If not, have you spoken with your academic advisor or have plans to attend the Majors Fair?

- *Have you prepared for your advising appointment in advance?* Students often come to advising appointment waiting for the advisor to tell them what to do. However, it is important your student comes prepared with classes in mind for the next semester, questions they have about policies, procedures or processes, their academic and personal goals, and requests for resources. The more engaged and prepared your student is for their appointment, the more they will learn and be better equipped to take action as a result of their advising discussion.

Choosing a Major Workshops

Each semester the College of Charleston holds multiple Choosing a Major workshops run jointly by the Academic Advising and Planning center and the Career Center. The reason a major is so important is because it is an academic requirement for graduation, not because it will determine what career or occupation you can enter. Majors are best chosen on the basis of interest in the subject and aptitude or ability to be successful academically as well.

During these hour-long workshops, we uncover myths & discuss facts about being “undeclared”, discuss the difference in choosing a MAJOR vs. choosing a CAREER, suggest steps for making your decision, and provide tools and resources to assist you in the major and career planning process. The Career Center and The Academic Advising & Planning Center staff will help you identify your interests to majors and careers. This is done through a workbook assessment that will provide the student with personalized career and educational planning information needed to make a well-informed decision. After working through the workbook you are given a list of majors that may coincided with your results.

**Workshops this spring:**

Feb. 9 (Tues); March 16 (Wed)
April 5(Tue)

All workshops are at 4:00pm in the Career Center
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