Attending: Casey Carr, Elva Cha, Derek Chang, Janet Corson-Rikert, David DeVries, Betsy East, Greg Eells, Kappy Fahey, Kathryn Gleason, Mary Beth Grant, Tanni Hall, Christine Holmes, Kent Hubbell, Katherine Lai, Michel Louge, Tim Marchell, Alan Mathios, Susan Murphy, Brendan O’Brien, Meril Pothen, Lisa Ryan, Lisa Shaffer, Janis Talbot, Catherine Thrasher-Carroll, Don Viands, Brenda Wickes, Tow Yau

Guests: Bonnie Comella, Director, Undergraduate Biology Advising, CALS and A&S; Patti Papapietro, Director of Counseling and Advising, College of Human Ecology; Fran Shumway, Director of Advising, College of Engineering; Tremayne Waller, Associate Director of Advising and Diversity, College of Architecture, Art, and Planning.

Upcoming meetings:
Dates TBD Spring ’10 3-4:30pm Hall of Fame Room in Friends Hall (Schoelkopf Annex)

I. Welcome and Agenda – Susan Murphy, Chair
A. Today’s focus is on the role and function of undergraduate academic advising offices as part of the university’s network of student support.
B. We have an eight member panel from the university Professional Academic Advising Leaders (PAAL) group who will describe the unique and critical role of the advising offices, as well as illustrate how and when they collaborate with other departments and services on campus to provide support to students who are struggling.
C. Rather than a formal presentation, the panelists will respond to prepared discussion questions and take additional questions and comments from council members.

II. Introduction of panel members: David DeVries, Director of Academic Advising, College of Arts & Sciences; Patti Papapietro, Director of Counseling and Advising, College of Human Ecology; Lisa Shaffer, Director of Student Services, School of Hotel Administration; Bonnie Comella, Director, Undergraduate Biology Advising, CALS and A&S; Laura Lewis, Director of Student Services, College of Industrial and Labor Relations; Fran Shumway, Director of Advising, College of Engineering; Lisa Ryan, Director of Counseling and Advising, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences; Tremayne Waller, Associate Director of Advising and Diversity, College of Architecture, Art, and Planning.

III. Discussion questions and key conversation points
A. Are there times or circumstances that you consider “high-risk”? If yes, are there particular approaches you take to address them?
   1. Yes, there are many “high-risk” situations for students which academic advising staff notes. These include: being placed on academic probation, being asked to withdraw from the university due to academic failure, academic integrity violations; when a student stays in town or on campus and “hangs out” even though they have been withdrawn from the university, and when a student returns from either a health or academic leave.
      a. In cases of a student being placed on an academic warning or probation, the timing and type of communication with the student is crucial. Preparing a student to hear that s/he is going to be reviewed with an email before an actual academic review meeting and a post-meeting follow-up
email communicating belief that the student can get back on track has seemed helpful. Also, reminding the student about support services such as CAPS, “Let’s Talk” walk-in hours, Empathy, Assistance and Referral Services (EARS) peer-to-peer counseling, and the Learning Strategies Center lets the student know that assistance is available to address his/her current academic difficulty.

b. In the cases of an academic or health leave, students are informed and their parents are notified of the leave. Parent involvement at this point varies from situation to situation and can be helpful or not, for both the student and the advising office staff member.
   - Academic advisors often take on a “virtual advisor” role, assisting students on leave by clarifying requirements for return, providing information and being generally encouraging.

c. When a student is withdrawn from the university but stays on campus or in town, there are different circumstances that can arise and cause concern.
   - Student is often living “illegally” on campus or in an affiliated fraternity/sorority house, hanging out and hiding out, not addressing the underlying issues that led to the required academic leave. Risk for depression or suicide, or the exacerbation of other mental health conditions is a possibility. Campus mental health support resources are not available.

d. When a student returns from a leave is another high-risk time.
   - A recent addition to the support opportunities for students returning from leave is a therapist led peer-support group sponsored by Cornell Minds Matter (CMM).
   - The CMM group also recently created a brochure on how to make a leave productive and ways to successfully manage the return process.

B. How do you handle concerns about students from other colleges? If a student from your college is performing poorly or exhibiting concerning behavior in another college, how would you become aware of the situation?
   1. Academic advising offices have relationships with each other and work together to support students they share. The monthly PAAL meeting is one formalized way the staff from these various offices share information and best practices, as well as maintaining their on-going relationships.

C. What role do you and your colleagues play in relation to the faculty? Do you receive reports from faculty members about students of concern?
   1. Staff from the academic advising offices have relationships with faculty in their college and frequently are alerted to students who might be in distress by faculty members and TAs.
   2. An email goes to faculty from the dean or other administrator in each of the undergraduate colleges at specific times during the semester, encouraging faculty to communicate with the advising offices about students who are not showing up, are in the “D” to “F” grade range or who are showing other signs of concern. Advising staff attempt to meet in person with each student who is named and offer assistance and support, as well as referrals to offer offices and services on campus.
   3. One of the challenges for faculty with students taking courses in more than one college is the different access rights to student records in the different colleges. Advising office staff does have access to student records across the colleges, illustrating the importance and benefit of a strong working relationship with the faculty in their college.
   4. Another challenge is the different policies in the different colleges (i.e. add/drop dates).
      a. This would be a good topic for PAAL and the Associate Deans to discuss together.

D. How well connected is your office to the Alert Team? How often have you referred cases to the team? To what extent do you feel you understand how and when to contact the Team?
   1. Academic advising staff is aware of the Alert Team and bring cases to them when the needs of a student of concern seem to be greater than the resources of just the one advising office.
   2. Sometimes, advising staff members are invited to attend Alert Team meetings in order to share and hear information, and to help plan for a higher level of support for a distressed student.

E. How often do you encounter or receive reports about graduate students? What happens to these students?
   1. Reports of graduate students of concern do come to the attention of academic advising staff fairly regularly. When this happens, the advising staff contact the graduate school office, the director of
graduate study for the field and perhaps the graduate field assistant to communicate the concerning behavior and to activate these specific systems in place to support graduate students.

F. What else would you like the council to know?

1. Having up-to-date student contact information is critical. Please keep thinking about ways to improve obtaining and maintaining accurate records for each student from year to year.
   a. One possibility might be to tie registration to completing emergency contact information each semester.

2. An electronic database for communicating observed signs and symptoms of distress between advising staff and academic administrators, and the Alert Team might assist in our efforts to identify struggling students as early as possible.

3. How can we set expectations for students and their parents regarding professional counseling vs. other support options when the student receives a lower grade than anticipated?
   a. During fall orientation this year, the dean of the College of Human Ecology talked with parents separately and set realistic expectations regarding academic performance and their first year students. The advising office staff has noted a positive difference in the type and number of parent calls to their office this semester.
   b. Introductory courses where students could hear from faculty about the various professions within their field of study could help replace students’ idealistic thinking with a more realistic and well-rounded understanding of their major and perspective field of employment.
      ▪ Engineering 1050 is a course that provides this type of experience.
      ▪ The College of Industrial and Labor Relations has an intro course as well.
   c. In the undergraduate biology major, second year students advise first year students and help them connect with their faculty advisor through advising group meetings.

G. Additional comments from council members

1. The topic area of mental health support for students who are abroad is one that has not yet received much attention. Might we address this in a future meeting?

2. We need to get the Notice and Respond “gatekeeper education” program to as many faculty as possible.
   a. This council could make a recommendation to the Deans/Associate Deans that this program be encouraged, or even required for all faculty members, as part of the “Re-Imagining Cornell” idea.
   b. A CITE skit about “Notice and Respond” or the actual one hour program could be done at a Faculty Senate meeting followed by a request that members go back to their department chairs and ask to have the program at a department meeting.

3. Is there a student gatekeeper program?
   a. A program has been developed and is being presented within the Greek system by the Cashen Mentors.
   b. Kent Hubbell, Dean of Students, is working with fraternities and sororities to develop a “Health & Well-Being Chair” in each chapter. These officers will be charged with looking out for signs of distress and helping struggling students get connected to support resources.
   c. A few additional student groups of peer advisors/mentors received the program this fall. It is ready to be presented more broadly to targeted students in leadership or helper roles.
   d. Cornell Minds Matter has a “How to Help A Friend Who Is Depressed” program that is slated to be presented in residence halls.

Minutes taken by Catherine Thrasher-Carroll