The Academic Advising Manual

2014-2015

Offices of
Academic Services
Suite 230
Glendening Hall
240-895-4388

Don Stabile
   Interim Associate Dean of Academic Services
Kelvin Clark
   Academic Advisor
Kevin Selby
   Coordinator of Disability Services
Anna Speck
   Office Associate, Office of Academic Services
Academic Advising at St. Mary’s College

Advising is an integral part of the educational process at St. Mary’s College. It provides the most significant mechanism by which students can relate their goals to their educational experiences and is an important extension of the teaching/learning process. Academic advising is a developmental process through which students are assisted in defining, clarifying, and realizing their life and career goals as they actively consider, revise and implement their educational plans. It is a decision-making process by which students attain their maximum education potential through discussion with an adviser. Advising is an ongoing, multifaceted process for which both the student and advisor share responsibility. The adviser serves as a facilitator of communication; as a coordinator of learning experiences related to course planning, career planning and academic progress review; and as an agent of referral to other campus agencies as necessary. Although the adviser’s counsel can be of great value to the student, it is, however, the student who bears the ultimate responsibility for monitoring and ensuring completion of requirements for graduation. One of the keys to “developmental advising,” which is the approach to advising at St. Mary’s, is allowing the advisee to make his or her own decisions.

Developmental Advising

Developmental advising forms the dominant paradigm of advising at schools comparable to St. Mary’s College. Developmental advising requires that an adviser take a shared responsibility with the student for formulating a life plan of education and career goals to help the student develop his or her total potential. Early writings on developmental advising contrasted it with prescriptive advising. Prescriptive advising takes a “medical” approach – telling students to take what’s good for them – while developmental advising is more similar to a counseling approach. Surveys show that early in their careers, students place a higher priority on prescriptive methods, which is not surprising inasmuch as students want to know what they need to do in order to graduate. As a result, advising theorists now recognize a hierarchy of needs for advising sessions. Once students fulfill their desire to learn how to meet specific requirements and how to schedule classes, there is still time for some discussion of larger issues. Advising conversations can thus encompass life goals, vocational goals, choice of major, and a discussion of how these larger issues relate to selection of courses for any given semester.

This developmental approach to advising means that the adviser must put a soft spotlight on the student during advising sessions. Advising is an opportunity for one-to-one meetings between a faculty member and a student that is not centered on the student’s work in a particular class, yet also has serious import; thus, the focus of these meetings should extend beyond merely picking courses for the subsequent semester. Faculty advisers can engage in a discussion to find out what skills an advisee has and whether they seem compatible with the student’s goals. Responsibility for the student’s success becomes shared between the adviser and the student, a degree of sharing that can be negotiated between them.
Students often come to college with unrealistic expectations about their educational goals and abilities. For example, nationwide studies show that while only 12% of incoming students expect to change majors, about 75% of them actually do. At St. Mary’s, about 85% of students in recent entering classes rated themselves in the top 10% academically; thus, many are going to be disappointed in the evaluation of their academic work. College is a period of transition and change for students, and they need more help getting through that period than they are likely to admit.

Students near the end of their academic careers at St. Mary’s have expressed the opinion that they needed more guidance in their first year at the College, and that they would have liked a better relationship with their advisers. However, they feel uncomfortable approaching faculty members on their own. They would appreciate any efforts that you as an adviser can make to foster that contact. Simply requesting that they make an appointment three or four weeks into the semester is a valuable step toward a closer degree of rapport, especially if you follow up on it with a note, e-mail or otherwise, requesting that they stop by your office.

Students are more successful academically when they feel that they matter to someone else. Advising is an important part of giving them that feeling. Good advising also increases retention, helps improve grades, facilitates academic growth, and fosters a feeling of greater satisfaction with the institution. The responsibilities connected with academic advising at St. Mary’s College reflect the goals of developmental advising.

**Responsibilities of Advisers**

On November 11, 1995, the faculty of St. Mary’s College adopted the following list of responsibilities for academic advisers:

- Allocate time to meet with advisees at least once each semester.
- Know the core curriculum and keep abreast of changes.
- Know the requirements for majors in each discipline and be able to answer questions about them.
- Aid advisees in designing schedules to meet their educational, co-curricular, and career interests, their goals and requirements.
- Refer advisees needing further advice or other campus-related information to the appropriate person or office.
- Monitor each student’s academic progress and maintain up-to-date files containing each student’s appropriate records.
- Be willing to assist advisees encountering academic problems or related difficulties and, as necessary, refer them for further assistance.
- Make advisees aware of their responsibilities and encourage them to review their progress toward a degree.
Advisors should also

- guide self-evaluation of academic progress
- describe and explain with accuracy the function and value of the core curriculum and importance of breadth in course selection
- locate and follow academic and other campus policies and procedures when advising
- encourage engagement in internships and study abroad experiences
- discuss classroom experiences and foster students’ abilities to make meaning from these
- list strategies for improvement of study skills and time management, and make referrals for additional support as necessary and appropriate
- assist advisees in declaring majors and minors in a timely fashion
- assist students in identifying alternatives for reaching their goals and in choosing among options for meeting them
- preserve confidentiality in their interactions with advisees and follow FERPA regulations appropriately

In general, this list of advisor responsibilities is based on the research and scholarship in the field of academic advising; in particular, we refer to O’Banion’s (1972/1994) advising taxonomy:

- exploration of life goals
- exploration of career/educational goals
- selection of educational program
- selection of courses
- scheduling of classes

While these responsibilities are wide-ranging, it is also important to remember that there are limits to what an adviser can and should do for an advisee:

- An adviser should not make decisions for an advisee, but should be a sympathetic listener and offer constructive options for an advisee to consider.
- An adviser cannot tell an advisee to reduce his or her course load, but can make recommendations to the advisee if he or she gets into academic trouble.
- An adviser should not reveal confidential information about an advisee to anyone but College officials who have a need to know.
- An adviser should not try to take care of emotional or psychological problems an advisee might be having but should refer him or her to the Office of Academic Services or the Health and Counseling Center.

Responsibilities of Advisees

Advisees should, in general, take responsibility for their developing in all five areas of O’Banion’s taxonomy. They will:
• Explore their life goals
• Explore their career and educational goals
• Select an educational program that suits their individual abilities, needs, interests, values
• Select appropriate courses each term
• Develop an appropriate schedule of classes each term

On November 11, 1995, the faculty of St. Mary’s College also adopted the following list of responsibilities for advisees. Advisees will:

- Schedule appointments as needed throughout the semester to meet with the specific academic adviser.
- Come to advising appointments prepared with a proposed schedule of classes, course options, and questions.
- Describe the requirements and goals of the Core Curriculum.
- List the requirements of the major.
- Select an appropriate academic adviser as educational goals evolve.
- Know all appropriate deadlines and meet them.
- Ask the adviser for further academic, institutional, or personal advice as needed and seek additional counsel from other sources when appropriate.
- Notify the adviser of academic difficulties and take the necessary steps to rectify problems.
- Make all final decisions about goals and educational plans.

Additionally, advisees will:

- Follow through on referrals and recommendations for improvement of academic performance or for meeting their academic and personal goals.
- Use the resources available to them (the Portal, To the Point, faculty members, Academic Services, student life personnel) in making informed decisions.

**General Information on Advising**

**Web-based Advising and Registration**

Every semester, during the 10th week, students meet with their advisers for advising and preparing for registration during the following two weeks. All the materials for advising and registration may be found online. Students and their academic advisers have access to student academic records via the College Webpage through the Portal (at https://seahawks.smcm.edu/ics). Be sure to use the tabs, NOT the back button, to return to a previous screen.

Once logged into the Portal, click on the Faculty tab and then on the “Advising Tools” link on the left side of the screen. This will bring you to a new screen where you can access your advisee list. There are multiple options for what grouping of advisees you see: “Needs Registration Clearance” is often the most useful choice for the advising session. Do be careful, though, to select the correct semester from the pull-down menu.
provided: the system will default to the current term, and you need to clear students for the following term (so, when advising in October 2014, you’ll select Spring 2015 as the semester to grant registration clearance for). To see a student’s information (unofficial transcript, degree audit, etc.), click on his or her name. The Registration Clearance button is to the right of the students’ names. Once you give the student approval to register, he or she will then be able to go online to register up to 48 hours after his or her designated appointment time. Students will be able to see their registration times on the “My Academics” tab of their Portal; you’ll be e-mailed a list of the dates and times for all your advisees in the week before registration begins.

A. During that 48 hours, students will be able to go back and change their schedules; they may come back to you for additional advice. They may also register for completely different classes than the ones you discussed!

B. When students find themselves closed out of a course they may come back to you for additional advice. They may also go it alone. Therefore, you should work carefully with them during the advising session to select alternatives.

If you are unable to meet with your advisees due to an emergency, you should inform your department chair and ask him or her to arrange to take care of them. Long-distance advising, if either you or your advisees are out of town, is an option that should be adopted with caution, and sparingly. Alternatively, if you have sufficient advance notice, you can send a list of your advisees and who will be advising them to the Office of Academic Services and we will temporarily transfer them. This should be your option of last resort, as you will know your own advisees better than a substitute will, and they will ideally feel better cared for if not shuffled around too much. You should at no time clear an advisee to register if he or she has not spoken (or corresponded, in some detail) with you or your appointed substitute.

Please remember: If you do not click the “Registration Clearance” button, your advisees will not be able to register.

Requirements Linked to Catalogs

Students are held responsible for all of the requirements – both as they apply to the Core Curriculum and to the major – of the catalog in effect for the year they entered St. Mary’s. Transfer students (from other Maryland public institutions) may be under an earlier catalog than the one for the year in which they first entered St. Mary’s; their catalog is determined by the date they first began their degree-seeking college studies at another public institution in Maryland. Furthermore, any student may elect to change to a newer catalog (but they cannot move backward without petitioning the Academic Policy Committee). A student might change catalogs in order to take advantage of a new major, for example. In that case, the student must also fulfill all the requirements (core curriculum and major) of the new catalog. Students may take advantage of minors without changing their catalog year. These rules apply to all aspects of the catalog except for the academic policies; academic policies of the most current catalog are in
effect for all students at the College. Back catalogs are available on the college website, on the same page as the current catalog.

**Academic Load for a Given Semester**

- Every student must complete 128 semester hours (credits) of academic work in order to graduate.
- The hypothetical student who completes 16 semester hours each semester would graduate with exactly the 128 semester hours needed for graduation in four years.
- Full-time status is considered to be at least 12 semester hours of academic work. *It is very important that students planning to live in campus housing, who are receiving certain types of financial aid, or who are foreign nationals here on a student visa retain full-time status.* A student may register for up to 19 semester hours without being considered as carrying an overload.
- Students are permitted to register for a maximum of 19 credits at registration. To register for an overload, they need their adviser’s signature as an acknowledgment of the overload. Students on academic probation are not allowed to register for more than 16 credits without the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Services.
- Any overload must be accomplished during the schedule-adjustment (“drop-add”) period.
- Students registering for more than 19 credits will be charged a per-credit additional fee.
- Sometimes, seniors who wish to graduate are allowed to register for an overload even if they do not have a strong academic record; however, they should be advised of the risks, and their progress should be monitored carefully.
- Students may register for a maximum of 12 credits in SMCM summer sessions, for which they are billed on a per-credit basis.

First-time students should be cautious about going beyond a 17-credit course load in their first semester, until they can assess how well they will do with the rigors of full-time academic work in college. Some students who have strong reasons to believe that they will encounter academic difficulty might consider registering for 12 semester hours in their first semester. Indicators for possibly registering for reduced loads include especially poor high school preparation; very low standardized test scores; competing responsibilities, such as work or family responsibilities; and documented learning disabilities that have posed strong academic challenges in the past.

**Planning a schedule**

There are four basic requirements for graduation:
- Completion of at least 128 credit hours
- 44 of these semester hours must be at the upper-division (i.e., at the 300 or 400 level)
- A major
- The Core Curriculum requirements
  - Core101 or 301
- One semester of international language study
- Six courses, chosen from different disciplines, that satisfy the six Liberal Arts Approaches areas of study (Natural Sciences w/lab, Mathematics, Social Science, Arts, Cultural Perspectives, and Humanistic Foundations)
- Experiencing the Liberal Arts in the World

Of the 128 overall credits, 32–36 are devoted to Core Curriculum requirements (the ELAW requirement may be satisfied by a particular course, but this is not always the case). It’s helpful to think of the Core as taking up 25% of a student’s coursework. This means that a student could complete his or her Core requirements by the end of the first year — although this is by no means required. It’s wise, though, not to postpone too many of them until junior or senior year.

Most majors require 44–48 credits, with a few (such as Biochemistry) significantly higher. All current majors incorporate at least one course that also satisfies a Core requirement (such as Psyc101, which both is required for the Psychology major, and also satisfies the Core social science requirement). While a student will only earn 4 credits for taking the course, he or she may use it to satisfy both—really, any number of different—requirements. It’s helpful to think of the major as taking up slightly more than 1/3 of a student’s schedule.

The remainder of the 128 credits may be devoted to a second major, to one or more minors, or to electives. This means that students have approximately 40% of their schedule to play around with, with very few restrictions. Encourage your advisees to make a careful plan to ensure that they satisfy all graduation requirements in a timely manner, and then help them explore the various other options open to them.

**Dropping [or Withdrawing from] and Adding Courses**

- The first 2-4 weeks of each semester are designated as a “schedule-adjustment period.” If students are going to add a course, though, it should be done in the 1st week—otherwise they will be too far behind, and the instructor is unlikely to let them add. Adding students during this period is entirely at faculty discretion.
- During the first four weeks, students may add or drop classes from their schedule by presenting completed “add-drop” forms to the front desk at Glendening Hall. Students do not have to get faculty signatures to drop, but it’s polite of them to communicate their intentions to their instructors.
- The course changes made during this period of the semester will not be reflected on the student’s permanent record.
- No fees are assessed for changes within the first two weeks of the semester; each course change made thereafter will be charged a small schedule-adjustment fee.
- No regular full-semester courses may be added after the fourth week: the only exceptions to this deadline are half-semester courses, independent studies, private music lessons, and theatre practica.)
- *Withdrawing from courses after the schedule-adjustment period:* After the fourth week and before the end of the tenth week of classes, *but not thereafter*, students may
withdraw from courses. A grade of “W” for any course from which a student withdraws will be placed on the student’s permanent record.

- The Associate Dean for Academic Services may grant exceptions to the policies on adding and withdrawing from courses in unusual circumstances and following consultation with the Academic Policy Committee.

**Repeating Courses**

- Students may repeat most courses in order to improve their grade.
- If a course is designated “may be repeated for credit,” it may be repeated to improve the grade only if the topic is the same as the original offering.
- Other than the above caveat, there is no limit on the number of times a student may repeat a course.
- If the course is repeated at another institution, neither the new grade nor the St. Mary’s grade counts toward the GPA, i.e., the student gets transfer credit and the original grade is removed from computation of GPA.
- If the course is repeated at St. Mary’s, the most recent grade is the one that counts, *even if it is lower than the original grade.* (This has happened!)
- If the original grade was passing, and the latest grade is failing, the student loses the original credits. (This has also happened!)
- No matter what, a record of both attempts at the course, and both grades, will remain on the transcript; the “replacement” affects only the computation of the student’s GPA.
- Students may not repeat courses after earning a degree from the College.

**Mid-Term Deficiency (MTD) Reports**

- MTD reports are reported by faculty at the end of the sixth week of the semester, through the same on-line grading system used for end-of-term grades; “deficiency” means any grade in the D or F range (or NC in a credit/no credit course).
- Students and their advisers may view MTDs on the student’s grade report on the Portal (being sure to select the correct term, and then looking for midterm grades).
- Advisers use the MTD reports to help advisees assess realistically their academic progress.
- MTDs may influence decisions about dropping courses before the deadline.
- MTDs may influence decisions about course selection for the next semester.
- Advisers should pay special attention to MTDs for students on probation, first-year students, students with learning disabilities and students with more than one MTD in academic courses.
- The Associate Dean for Academic Services will contact students with multiple MTDs.

*Note that, as faculty members, you can help students be successful by providing clarity about your expectations, frequency of assessment opportunities in a variety of formats, and immediacy of feedback. It’s very hard for students, especially those with certain*
kinds of learning disabilities, to plan and practice good time management skills if they do not know due dates, criteria for grading, and course goals.

**Merit Scholarships Requirements**

- Make reasonable progress towards graduation.
- Ideally, maintain a GPA of 3.00 for each semester.
- Complete no fewer than 12 credits each semester.

Students who fall below these minimum standards have one probationary semester in which to correct the deficiency. Students who fall below these minimum standards in any future semester may lose their merit scholarship. Students who lose their merit scholarship have the right to appeal to the Scholarship Review Committee.


FERPA, more popularly known as the Buckley Amendment, guarantees that a student’s educational records are private. Thus, College policy limits disclosure of educational records (including information in advising folders), or personally identifiable information (such as test scores or paper grades), without the student’s written consent. Implications of FERPA for faculty members:

- Do not release **any** student information (other than directory information) to anyone other than the student, or to appropriate College officials with a need to know based on a legitimate educational purpose.

  The following is considered “directory information” by the College:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone number
  - E-mail address
  - Photographs
  - Date and place of birth
  - Year in college
  - Parents’ names and addresses
  - Prior educational institutions attended
  - Dates of college attendance
  - Degrees, scholarships, and/or awards received
  - Weight and height of members of athletic teams
  - Participation in officially recognized activities and sports.

- Do not post student grades by name, ID number, or other identifiable code, without the students’ written permission.
- Do not leave students’ papers in public places to be picked up; rather, deliver them individually to the student.
- Do not give one student’s paper to another student without written permission.
- Do not discuss students’ educational records (including grades in your courses or information in the advisee folder) with their parents. In the rare situations in
which parents contact you, inform them politely that you cannot discuss the
student without written consent, and the reasons why. If they wish to challenge
the policy, have them contact the Registrar (who is the College official designated
to oversee compliance with FERPA), or the Associate Dean for Academic
Services.

We have created a release form whereby students can give consent to discuss their
academic, financial, or other records in a one-time conference with any specific
individual or give a more general consent for continual discussion. The form is
available on the website on the Academic Services page, under “forms”
(accessible from the toolbox in the upper righthand corner of the page). Please
note that a separate form must be filled out for each individual to whom records
information is being granted, and that the student’s signature on said forms must
be notarized, or witnessed by a college official.

• FERPA allows disclosing student information (such as might be contained in a
letter of recommendation) “to another school in which it understands that the
student is currently enrolled, or seeks or intends to enroll.”
• FERPA has no provision for disclosing academic information (such as would be
contained in a letter of recommendation) to prospective employers. Therefore, it
is good practice to keep in your files a student’s written request for such a letter.
• Students have the right, under FERPA, to challenge the accuracy of information
in their records.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
(Section 504).

Responsibility for ADA coordination for students. The coordination of services for
students with disabilities for academic adjustments takes place in the Office of Academic
Services. Students must submit documentation for any accommodations. If the
accommodations include academic adjustments, these adjustments are coordinated
through the Office of Academic Services.

Decisions on Accommodations under ADA. The ADA does not list disabilities that are
covered under the statute. Rather, it defines disability as:

A. a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major
   life activities of such individual;
B. a record of such an impairment; or
C. being regarded as having such an impairment.

(42 USC §12102)

A “qualified individual with a disability” means:

an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules,
policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation
barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility
requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity.

(42 USC §12115)

Access to education is also guaranteed by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504):

A postsecondary educational institution may not, on the basis of disability, exclude any qualified disabled student from any course, course of study, or other part of its education program or activity, nor shall such students be denied admission or be subjected to discrimination.

(29 USC §794)

The disabilities for which students most often seek educational access accommodations fall into the following categories: learning disabilities (most commonly ADHD, but also including other learning disabilities); mobility impairments (such as those associated with MS); sensory impairments (such as hearing or vision impairments); other health impairments (such as seizure disorders); and psychological disorders. In the latter category, most of the potential DSM-IV diagnoses might apply, although most psychosexual diagnoses (such as pedophilia), as well as compulsive gambling, kleptomania, pyromania, and psychoactive substance use disorders are excluded under Title V of the ADA from being considered “disabilities.” Likewise, temporary conditions, such as a broken leg, do not qualify as disabilities under the ADA.

The requirements for documentation of disabilities are fairly standard from one educational institution to another, and are reasonably stringent. We have a set of guidelines on documentation for use at St. Mary’s College; any student or parent requesting information on documentation is given these guidelines.

Faculty responsibilities under ADA:

• Provide the accommodations listed in the official letter from the Office of Academic Services; this letter is sent to faculty members teaching courses in which the student has enrolled, after the end of the schedule-adjustment period. [This letter may come earlier for some students needing specific assistance early in the semester, such as note-taking assistance.] Students have signed a release to allow this information to be sent to instructors and adviser.
• Keep information about the disability strictly confidential. As a part of confidentiality, do not call attention to the provision of accommodations in your classes.
• Advisers of students with disabilities should pay particular attention to any mid-term deficiency reports about them, and in general should monitor and discuss their academic situation with them.
• Contact the Office of Academic Services whenever you have a question about academic adjustments for students with disabilities.

Academic Dishonesty

The policies and procedures governing cases of academic dishonesty are provided to the students each year in the student handbook, titled To the Point, located on the College Webpage by going under the “Student” pulldown menu (on the InsideSMCM page) and selecting the “To the Point” link (or doing a site search for “To the Point”). The policies and procedures for academic dishonesty are located in the section Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. Please refer to them if you encounter a case of academic dishonesty. It is also important that each of your syllabi state your own policy on handling cases of academic dishonesty in your classes. The statement should refer to the larger College policy and state where the students can find that policy. Contact the Associate Dean for Academic Services for more guidance; there is also information on the Academic Services webpage under “academic misconduct.”

Important and Commonly Used Forms

This section of the advising manual is designed to provide advisers with information about the various forms commonly used at St. Mary’s College by students, faculty advisers, and instructors. A brief descriptive paragraph has been included for each of the forms, the procedure for filling it out, and the office where the form is filed.

ADD/DROP FORM

This form is used by students who wish to add or drop a course or courses. One form may be used for adding/dropping up to four courses. The student should complete the name, student ID number, course title, discipline code (e.g., PSYC), course code and section numbers, and the number of credits required for each class, whether it is to be added or dropped. The signature of the instructor of each class is required on the appropriate line for adds; for drops, the Registrar does not require a signature within the first two weeks of the semester, although signatures are required in weeks 3 & 4. One exception to this is that if a student wishes to drop CORE101 or CORE301, they must first meet with the Dean of the Core Curriculum (as it is important for them to be informed of the consequences of dropping those courses before they make their final decision). If the addition of one or more courses creates a credit overload (20 or more credits), the signature of the student’s academic adviser is also required as an acknowledgement of the overload. When the slip is complete, it is taken to the front desk of Glendening Hall to finalize the process. During the schedule-adjustment period (primarily the first two weeks of classes), students may change their class schedule by presenting completed “add-drop” forms to the front desk, which will pass them on to the Office of the Registrar. The course “drops” made during the first four weeks of the semester will not be reflected on the student’s permanent record. Although no fees are assessed for changes within the schedule-adjustment period, each course change made thereafter will be charged a schedule-adjustment fee.
APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE/WITHDRAWAL
These forms are to be completed by any degree-seeking student wishing to take a leave of absence, including those taking a leave of absence from the College during the semester, who plan to return to the College at a later date. The forms are to be completed, signed, and approved (after an interview with the student) by Associate Dean for Academic Services, the Dean of Students, the Director of Residence Life, or the director of the Counseling Center, and submitted to the Office of Academic Services (Glendening Hall) no later than the last day of classes during the semester. If you know of an advisee intending a mid-semester leave, encourage him or her to take formal action sooner, rather than later, as there are financial repercussions for ignoring the formalities. Students who withdraw from the College are considered to be expressing their intent not to return. Both these forms may be found on the wall o’ forms in Glendening, or on the Academic Services webpage.

CHANGE OF GRADE
This form is to be used by the instructor of a course when there is valid reason for changing a student’s assigned grade for a class. A grade may be changed when an “I” grade has reverted to an “F” because the incomplete work was not completed on time, or most often to correct an error in the grade assigned. The form must be completed with the proper signatures and submitted to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall).

A student who wishes to appeal a grade must follow the grade grievance procedure outlined in the student handbook (under “College Policies and Procedures”). There is a strict time limit for the submission of such appeals.

EXTENSION OF “INCOMPLETE”
This form is to be completed when a student has been assigned a grade of “I” for a previous semester and is unable to complete the work within the time period specified at the time the “I” was granted. The form must be completed by the instructor and submitted to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall) no later than the last day to remove an incomplete, or the date, specified on the “Report of Incomplete” or “Extension of Incomplete” form, for the work to be completed.

LEARNING CONTRACT
This form is used by students wishing to enroll in guided readings, directed research, or independent study courses. The form is completed by the student who obtains the necessary signatures of the proper faculty member, adviser, and department chair, and then submits the contract to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall). The “Learning Contract” must be submitted no later than the last day of late registration each semester. Submission of this form allows a student to be registered for the course specified on the contract. The learning contract should indicate the type of grading (letter grade or credit/no credit), and should provide an accurate description of the course and its methodology. Methodology should include the method to be used to evaluate the student’s work (e.g., library-research paper, empirical paper, annotated bibliography, etc.).
PRE-APPROVAL OF TRANSFER CREDIT
This form is to be completed by all students planning to take classes at another college or university for transfer back to St. Mary’s College. The form must be completed with all the required information and submitted to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall) for inclusion in the student’s academic file. Failure to submit this form prior to taking classes elsewhere may mean that transfer credit will not be allowed.

REMOVAL OF “INCOMPLETE”
This form is to be used when a student has completed work for which a grade of “I” was assigned, and the “I” is still the grade of record. When a student completes the assigned work and it is graded, the instructor should complete this form, sign it, and submit it to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall). All grades of “I” are changed to the grade indicated on the “Request for Grade of Incomplete” form unless a “Removal of Incomplete” or “Extension of Incomplete” form is filled out and filed with the Office of the Registrar.

REQUEST FOR AUDIT GRADING
This form is to be used by students who want to audit a course without receiving a letter grade or academic credit. The student completes the form and submits it to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall) no later than the last day of late registration each semester (the first two weeks of classes). The signature of the course instructor is required on this form to approve auditing a course.

REQUEST FOR A GRADE OF INCOMPLETE
This form is completed by an instructor, when grades are being reported, for any student who is being assigned a grade of Incomplete (“I”) for that semester. It is completed, signed by both the instructor and the student, and submitted to the Office of the Registrar along with the appropriate grade roster at the end of the semester. In cases where the student has requested an Incomplete but is not available to sign the form, the instructor should indicate this to the Office of the Registrar.

REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF ADVISER OR MAJOR
A student wishing to request a change of adviser should talk to the potential new adviser about the change. If the new adviser agrees to the change, the new adviser must email advising@smcm.edu to request the change. Students may, in most cases, declare or change both majors and minors themselves via the Portal (exceptions to this are the student-designed major, majors no longer offered in the most current catalog, or declarations of major after a student has 90 credit hours).

REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF CATALOG STATUS
This form is used by those students who choose to graduate under the requirements of a catalog subsequent to the one in effect at the time they entered St. Mary’s College. Changing catalogs is generally done when a student enters one year and finds that in the next year or two a new major has been added to the curriculum. The form is completed and submitted to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall). Students may also
petition the Academic Policy Committee to request a catalog change to the requirements of a previous College catalog.

REQUEST FOR CREDIT/NO CREDIT GRADING
This form is to be used by students who want to take a course without receiving a letter grade, but want to receive academic credit for the course. The student completes the form and submits it to the Office of the Registrar (Glendening Hall) no later than the end of the fourth week of classes each semester. The signature of the course instructor is not required on this form. A maximum of 16 semester hours elected on a credit/no credit basis can be applied towards graduation.

Academic Requirements for the Bachelor’s Degree

Each student who wishes to graduate from St. Mary’s College must:

1. Complete at least 128 semester hours, including at least 44 semester hours of upper division (300-400 level) courses, with a cumulative grade-point average of at least 2.00, both on an overall basis and in those courses that meet major requirements.

2. Take at least 30 of the last 36 semester hours of academic work toward the degree at St. Mary’s College. With the permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Services (following consultation with the Academic Policy Committee), this provision may be waived for students engaged in departmentally approved off-campus learning experiences (such as study-abroad programs).

3. Complete the core curriculum requirements in effect under the catalog in which they entered St. Mary’s College.

4. Meet the requirements of a major field.

Note: To be a candidate for a degree, a student must be enrolled as a degree-seeking student at some time during the 12 months preceding graduation.

The Core Curriculum

The core curriculum is designed as a course of study to help students develop important intellectual skills and abilities of expression as well as to provide fundamental knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences. The specific requirements of the core curriculum are listed in the catalog. The requirements can also be found in the Degree Audit part of a student’s academic record on the Portal. Students enrolled in the Nitze Scholars Program have slightly different Core requirements, as well as additional general college requirements. Information on these may be found on the Nitze Scholars website.
Majors and Minors

St. Mary’s awards Bachelor of Arts degrees in 22 disciplines or cross-disciplinary areas (some of them having more than one track of study), as well as a cross-disciplinary student-designed major. In addition SMCM offers seven cross-disciplinary minors and roughly nineteen department-based minors, and. The majors are Anthropology, Art, Art History, Asian Studies, Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry (2 tracks), Computer Science, Economics, English, History, International Languages and Cultures (5 tracks), Mathematics, Music, Natural Science, Philosophy, Physics (2 tracks), Political Science, Psychology, Public Policy (2 tracks), Religious Studies, Sociology, and Theatre, Film & Media Studies (2 tracks). The student-designed major allows students to create their own program of study by combining courses from at least three disciplines. The cross-disciplinary minors include African and African Diaspora Studies, Asian Studies, Democracy Studies, Environmental Studies, Museum Studies, Neuroscience, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. The departmentally-based minors include Anthropology, Art History, Art Studio, Biology, Computer Science, Dance, Economics, Educational Studies, English, Film & Media Studies, History International Languages & Cultures (5 tracks), Mathematics, Music (2 tracks), Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Religious Studies, Sociology, and Theater Studies. Please consult the college catalog for the requirements of each major, minor or study program.

Students wishing to certify as public school teachers choose a major appropriate to the grade level and subject they hope to teach, take pre-requisite courses designed to provide them with opportunities to determine whether or not teaching is a good career option (usually culminating with an Educational Studies minor), and then apply for admission to the Master of Arts in Teaching Program during their senior year. Students accepted into the M.A.T. graduate in May and return to campus in July; after a year-long, full-time program, they receive a masters degree and eligibility for MD certification. It is important to note that different teaching specialties require preparatory coursework at the undergraduate level beyond major requirements and the Ed Studies minor; students should be sure to refer to the checklists provided by the Ed Studies department, and also to consult with members of the Ed Studies faculty.

Course Options Beyond Classroom Courses

1. Internships (for academic credit)
   - Designed to provide focused experience within a setting, with both academic and experiential components.
   - Offered in most disciplines for 4 to 16 credits during a semester (or a maximum of 8 credits in the summer).
   - Open only to students who have earned at least 28 credits prior to commencing the internship.
   - Credits may be used to satisfy the Experiencing the Liberal Arts in the World requirement of the Core Curriculum.
   - In some disciplines, the credits may not be used for major requirements; check with the department if this is unclear in the catalog.
• Credits may count toward the 44 upper-division credits needed for graduation.
• Student must complete an internship agreement through the Career Development Center.
• Internships require a site supervisor and an academic supervisor who must be a member of the SMCM faculty, or eligible for faculty status.
• The faculty supervisor oversees the academic project.
• The academic project grade is posted on transcript, but does not enter into the GPA calculation.
• Students must receive a passing grade on the academic project in order to get credit for the internship.
• The combined total credits for internships and independent study cannot exceed 32 credits.

2. Study-Abroad Programs
The College is committed to internationalizing the St. Mary’s experience and expanding global engagement opportunities for its students, faculty, and staff. Some 55% of our students currently study abroad at some point during their undergraduate career.

St. Mary’s offers the following kinds of study-abroad opportunities:
• St. Mary’s own semester or summer program in Kanifing, The Gambia (with other sites under consideration);
• Semester, academic year or summer terms at international partner institutions with which St. Mary’s has a contractual or exchange relationship. St. Mary’s currently has partnerships with Akita International University in Akita, Japan; the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Oxford, England; University College Dublin, in Ireland; Fudan University in Shanghai, China; Institut d’Etudes Sciences Politiques in Paris, France; Institute for Central American Development Studies in San José, Costa Rica; Lingnan University in Hong Kong; Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand; the University of Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram, India; James Cook University in Cairns, Australia; Ruprecht-Karls Universitaet in Heidelberg, Germany; Université Michel de Montaigne in Bordeaux, France; and University of The Gambia in Kanifing, The Gambia.
• Short-term study tours with SMCM faculty.
• International internships, such as student-teaching in various countries or individual sites set up through the Career Development Center.
• Credits may be used to satisfy the Experiencing the Liberal Arts in the World requirement of the Core Curriculum.

SMCM students may also study abroad at non-SMCM sites through an outside program provider with approval.

The Office of International Education works with students interested in any of these programs to meet pre-departure, study-abroad requirements. The Office of International Education offers monthly information sessions and schedules individual appointments with students. The office is located in the Glendening Hall Annex.
3. **Independent Study**
   - Designed to provide an opportunity for a student to delve into a topic area that is not ordinarily offered in the curriculum, under direction of a faculty member. The work is largely independent with occasional faculty guidance.
   - Offered in most disciplines.
   - Credits *may* be used to satisfy the Experiencing the Liberal Arts in the World requirement of the core curriculum, if the independent study has a community focus and has received prior approval from the Academic Policy Committee. This is a fairly uncommon option.
   - Usually involves reading, or library-type study.
   - Requires a learning agreement to be filed in the Office of the Registrar no later than end of the drop-add period (the first two weeks of classes).
   - Typically 1 to 4 credits are earned during a semester with a maximum of 8 credits in any given semester (maximum 4 credits in summer school).
   - Credits may count toward the 44 upper-division credits needed for graduation in general college requirements (if at the 300 or 400-level).
   - In some majors, independent study credits cannot be applied to the major. When in doubt, check with the department.
   - Credits may be taken at any level. The level depends on the student classification (e.g., 100 for first year, 200-level for sophomore, etc.) *and* the level of work involved. Introductory work should not be accorded upper-division credit merely because a senior is undertaking it. First-year students are discouraged from taking independent study, and may do so only by petition to the department chair.
   - The combined total credits for internships and independent study cannot exceed 32 credits.
   - An individual with faculty status must be the mentor for independent study work; students may have dual mentors and thus make use of the expertise of individuals on the coaching or administrative staff.

4. **Directed Research/Guided Reading/Field Study**
   - Offered only in a few departments.
   - Directed research is typically used for students wishing to work on empirical projects, either as part of faculty member’s ongoing research program, or independently proposed by the student with a faculty mentor’s blessing.
   - Guided readings are coherently organized readings under the direction of a faculty member. The reading list and means of evaluation are formalized in a learning contract prior to registration.
   - Field studies or service-learning components are available or required in several departments. Most courses designated as field-study courses are in Educational Studies and Psychology.
   - Credits *may* be used to satisfy the Experiencing the Liberal Arts in the World requirement of the core curriculum, if the research has a community focus and has received prior approval from the Academic Policy Committee. This is fairly uncommon.
• Requires a learning agreement to be filed in Office of the Registrar no later than end of the drop-add period (the first two weeks of classes).
• 1 to 4 credits are earned during a semester
• Credits may count toward the 44 upper-division credits needed for graduation (if at the 300 or 400-level).
• In some departments, credits will not count toward the major; when in doubt, check with the department.
• Credits may be taken at any level. The level depends on the student’s classification (e.g., 100 for first year, 200-level for sophomore, etc.) and the level of work involved. Introductory work should not be accorded upper-division credit merely because a senior is undertaking it. First-year students are discouraged from taking these options.

Advising Students with Special Advising Needs

Students from different life circumstances and at different points in their academic careers often bring special needs to the advising relationship. This section provides information on advising students in some particular categories: students with disabilities; first-year students; returning students; undecided students; students outside the adviser’s discipline; transfer students; students planning to do St. Mary’s Projects; and student athletes.

1. Advising Students with Disabilities

Coordination of accommodations for students with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) occurs through the Office of Academic Services. Advisers and faculty members receive a letter at the end of the schedule-adjustment period for each of these students, briefly outlining the nature of the disability and the necessary accommodations. (In most a preliminary letter will be sent to assist faculty in identifying students as early as possible).

Students receive accommodations for disabilities only after submitting detailed results of tests and recommendations from qualified professionals. Accommodations usually involve such things as extended time for in-class assignments and examinations, testing situations with minimal distractions, note-taking assistance, and so on. These accommodations are spelled out in the letter faculty members and advisers receive. The accommodations are not optional; rather, they are required under the ADA. If a faculty member needs assistance in providing accommodations, they should contact the Office of Academic Services.

If one of your advisees has a documented disability, it is helpful if you discuss the disability with the student, and check periodically to find out how things are going. Most students do not want to have any special attention because of the disability, beyond the necessary academic accommodations. Thus, be as matter-of-fact as possible in your discussions with the student, and let him or her set the tone for and extent of the discussion. Sometimes, however, students with disabilities do require some additional
advocacy with offices around campus. When in doubt, please contact the Office of Academic Services for further information.

If one of your students mentions having a disability, but you have not received a letter about it (after the end of the schedule-adjustment period), please refer that student to the Office of Academic Services. Students are not provided accommodations for disabilities under ADA until they have provided the necessary documentation.

2. Advising First-Year Students

Many first-year students use their sudden new freedom as an opportunity to test their own, and the institution’s, limits; as a consequence, they do not perform as well academically as we (and they) would have hoped. One of our past students, whose first-year GPA was 1.14, described his first-year experience this way: “Having fun and having someone to do it with was never so easy. Life, in short, was never so great. Well, at least at first glance. Simply put, I failed because I allowed the pleasures from my social activities to take priority over my responsibility to ‘self.’”

Can advisers help first-year students deal with these pressures? Much of what is written about first-year advising indicates that they can. Advisers should be aware that the students who need their advice the most are often the least likely to seek it. Advisers can be a very important part of an “early warning system.” The best way to help advisees is to indicate an interest in their progress. One way to do so is to schedule a follow-up meeting early in the first semester, after the advisee has begun classes but before early assessment (which occurs around the end of the fifth week of classes). A meeting over a meal in the Campus Center, perhaps with a group of advisees, is an ideal way to show interest. Actually just sending out an email after about the third week of the term saying something to the effect of “Hello – I was wondering how you’re doing in both your classes and your out-of-class life at this point. I’d enjoy hearing from you about what you’re learning, what’s exciting, and what’s frustrating or troubling you at this point in time. I’m happy to meet in person or just ‘chat’ via e-mail” can often remind first year students (and others, too!) that they have a resource in their advisor.

Orientation provides the first structured interactions between first-year students and their advisers. All of the first-year students will have already registered during the summer. The initial advising meeting during Orientation will be a time to begin to establish the advising relationship. Because the transition into college is a particularly important developmental transition, advisers can let their advisees know that they would like to hear from them from time to time about their adjustment to college.

3. Advising Returning Students

Returning adult students have been away from their educational studies for some time and are often anxious about their return. In particular, they often have doubts about whether they can handle the rigors of college work and compete with other students in
the traditional 18–22 age range. Returning students are also often juggling the demands of family responsibility and work, as well as their studies.

Many returning students, especially those whose other responsibilities are particularly demanding, may be best advised to enroll in less than full-time work or in a course load below the typical 16 semester hours. Returning students also often require more careful attention to the times courses are offered, so that they can find a schedule that allows them to balance other responsibilities. It is often helpful for returning students to find others who are in similar situations, people with whom they can share strategies for dealing with their particular set of problems. Meeting other students also helps returning students to make connections on campus and facilitates the development of informal discussion groups that serve much like support groups.

4. Advising Undecided Students

For most advisers, at least some of their advisees will either not have decided on any major or will intend to major in a discipline different from their own. These two cases pose slightly different advising challenges. Undecided students may want to know something about how to decide on a major. One obvious piece of advice for them is that the exploration associated with our Core Curriculum may give them some ideas about what to major in. Undecided majors may also be worried about how to select a major that maximizes their potential to get a job in the future. Many advisers favor the advice that students should major in the discipline that interests them the most, because they will be ultimately more satisfied with their education if they do. And, in general, a liberal arts education within any major at the College will help prepare students to write better; to isolate problems; to think critically about problems; and to recognize that there are usually multiple approaches to solving problems. All of these skills are useful in many different careers, and if they have been truly successful in their studies, they should be attractive job candidates in a variety of entry-level careers. They may also decide, while they are in college, that they will want to pursue their education beyond the bachelor’s level. It is generally better to do that in a discipline that really interests and excites them than in one they think will be most lucrative – which may or may not be the case. Many advisers will no doubt differ with these opinions, but they may provide a place to start in discussing choice of majors with undecided students.

5. Advising Students Outside the Adviser’s Discipline

Students whose intended (or declared) major is in a discipline different from their adviser’s will be most concerned about getting appropriate advice to set them on the right path at the College. All first-year students will need to make progress toward satisfying core curriculum requirements, regardless of their major field. Furthermore, the beginning requirements for most majors are fairly straightforward, and are clearly specified in the catalog. Students can also be reassured that they may change their adviser as soon as they find a willing adviser within their major field. To do so, they should obtain the consent of the new adviser, who will then email their consent to advising@smcm.edu. Please reassure your first-year students that you understand the core curriculum
requirements, and refer them to others if they have questions you cannot answer. Encourage students to switch advisors once they have declared a major and have found a faculty member with whom they feel they can connect. Although they should feel welcome to stay with you, they should not feel as though they would be hurting your feelings to seek a different advisor.

6. Advising Transfer Students

Transfer students who have an Associate’s degree from a Maryland community college are entitled to have their credits accepted as equivalent to the lower division core requirements at St. Mary’s College. This means that even if, say, they have not studied an international language, as long as they have an Associate’s degree, they will not be required to do so here. All transfer students still need to meet the “Experiencing the Liberal Arts in the World” requirement, and almost all will have to take the liberal arts seminar for transfer students (CORE 301). Credits for technical (career) programs, including those leading to an AAS degree, are evaluated on a course-by-course basis. Please refer to appropriate sections of the current College catalog for more details. Evaluations of transfer credits are done by the transfer coordinator in the Registrar’s office, who consults with department chairs as necessary.

Transfer students from within Maryland typically enter the College under an earlier catalog, based on the year they first began their studies — although they may elect to move forward to a new catalog, as may any student.

Some cautions about grades of D are necessary. Many of our disciplines require grades of C- or better for courses taken to satisfy major requirements. Some courses might be used to satisfy both core curriculum and major requirements. If a student received a D in such a course at initial transfer, we would have to accept it for the Core requirement, but it would not satisfy the requirement in the major. This situation is comparable to a student getting a D in a course taken here at the College; the D would count toward the 128 semester hours needed for graduation, but would not count toward a major that requires grades of C- or better.

Transfer students may find that much of their previous coursework will not count towards their chosen major. They may have difficulties fitting in any remaining Core requirements, major requirements, and also the required 44 credits of upper-division coursework. They may have received credit for a class taken at a previous college, yet find it has not truly prepared them for the subsequent course in a sequence here; it is sometimes a good idea, in fact, for them to “repeat” courses, especially in the natural sciences. Don’t assume that because transfer students have already been to college, they know what they’re doing: in fact, that very prior experience may leave them ill-prepared to adjust to the changes of their new environment. Take the time to talk with transfer advisees about their expectations, preparation, and assimilation, and realize that each one’s situation is a little different.
7. Advising Student Athletes

Student athletes at St. Mary’s are often recruited to the institution by varsity sport coaches; they are dedicated to their sport and to their education. St. Mary’s, as a Division III school, has no scholarships for athletic participation. Paradoxically, student athletes often have better academic records during the season of their sport than otherwise. During the season, time demands force athletes to be more attentive to time management, and in addition, coaches often require certain study practices, such as study halls. Overall, average grades for athletes and non-athletes do not differ at St. Mary’s College.

The major faculty concern about student athletes involves missing classes for games or for practices. **No student should miss classes for practice or team meetings.** Student athletes often have less scheduling flexibility for their classes because they need to keep practice times free; thus, most student athletes will not have any classes during their required practices times.

Missing classes for games is a separate issue. Student athletes should inform faculty members of their game schedule early in the term, and make arrangements to deal with class conflicts, particularly over test dates. If it is at all possible, please try to work with athletes to allow them to attend their games. Both athletics and academics are very important to these students. Participation in athletics also contributes to high student satisfaction with college, and may be reflected in retention rates.

Coaches are very much involved in the academic lives of their student athletes. Some coaches will ask their athletes to give each faculty member a form to fill out during the semester concerning such matters as attendance and classroom performance. **Coaches are College officials with a legitimate academic interest in their student athletes, and thus it is appropriate to provide this information under the Buckley Amendment.** Coaches may also occasionally contact a faculty member about a particular student athlete, usually concerning one of the following issues:

- Class conflicts for competition (no student should miss class for practice).
- Academic performance of student athletes.
- Attendance patterns of student athletes.
- Student-athlete recommendations for honors and awards.
- Attendance at sports events and other activities.

Obviously no faculty member should evaluate any student in any way differently because of the student’s status as an athlete, and coaches are not likely to suggest such a practice. But they may well want information that will help them in working with their athletes, to motivate them to work up to their fullest potential.

**Helping Advisees Plan for Life after College**

Students are required to declare a major by the time they have achieved 56 credits; students who attempt to register for classes after this will find that they have holds on their accounts if they have not declared a major. Thus, most of your advisees who are
juniors and seniors will be students majoring in your own discipline. Students in their junior year who are not majoring in your discipline should be strongly encouraged to find an adviser in their major department or program. It is a good idea to set aside some of the advising appointment time in the sophomore year, and especially in the junior and senior years, to explore the student’s plans for the future. Students often groan when you bring up this topic, and indicate that they would just as soon avoid the discussion, but it is an important part of helping them to clarify their goals and plans.

It would be a good idea for you to mention to your advisees that as they progress in their undergraduate education, you as their adviser will want to discuss how their educational program fits into their larger life plans. Both you and your advisees should begin to think of the advising relationship beyond the mechanical one of selecting courses for the next semester. For example, as advisees clarify their plans for their majors, and as they move into the sophomore and junior years, what do their goals for life after college imply for their program of study while at the College? What strategies would be most helpful in reaching their goals?

1. Career Development Center

The Career Development Center provides a great deal of information related to career planning, job searches, preparation of resumes, and graduate and professional schools. Students are welcome to come by the Office of Academic Services for additional information. Advisers should consider referring students to the Career Development Center (CDC), beginning even as early as their first year. Through assessment the CDC helps students understand the relationship between the major and a variety of career fields and non-credit internship opportunities. In addition, the CDC can put students in touch with St. Mary’s College alumni in various fields. The CDC also helps students with the application process to graduate school, law school, medical school, and other professional schools. The CDC is located in Glendening Hall. As you assist your advisees with their academic planning, it is very common for them to present questions about career and life planning. CDC staff are available to provide you and your students with guidance with this portion of the advising process. A career is a lifelong series of decisions. The CDC offers a comprehensive program designed to assist students with preparing for the future.

2. Graduate Study in a Discipline

You are in a good position to offer advice about strategies for getting into graduate school in your particular discipline, and about resources that your advisee can use to help in this application process. Some students who are intending to pursue graduate study are exceptionally well-prepared, and will have good credentials on each of the three elements of their applications that will be important indicators for admission: GPA, GRE scores, and letters of recommendation; research or other professionally relevant experience is also an important factor considered by many disciplines (and is critical in some). Students should be encouraged to apply to some of the top-ranked programs in their area, as well as to apply to a range of schools. It is generally considered good advice to have students
apply to schools that (a) they are likely to get into; (b) they have a good chance of getting into; and (c) they have some (but maybe slim) chances of getting into. Bearing these three levels in mind, it is also good advice that they should not apply to any school they think they wouldn’t really want to attend. Many of our students think about graduate school only within the mid-Atlantic region. It is often helpful advice to get them to think outside of this box.

You may be able to help students whose records indicate a more modest preparation for graduate study to think realistically about their goals and strategies for getting into a program. They should also carefully examine the match between their credentials and the program’s admissions requirements, and seek programs with a range of possibilities. Generally speaking, Master’s degree programs may be more realistic for some students than Ph.D. programs, and may be a good stepping stone into doctoral programs later on.

The earlier students begin doing their preparatory work for graduate school applications, the better. They should be encouraged, for example, to register for GREs in the spring of junior year or in the fall of senior year. They should be encouraged to do some preparatory work for the GREs, such as seriously using one of the guides for these examinations.

3. Pre-Law Students

Students intending to go on to law school often major in the social sciences, but that is not necessarily the case. Many of the same issues relevant to graduate study in a discipline also apply to students intending to go to law school. They should begin the process earlier rather than later, and should engage in some preparatory work before taking the LSAT. Currently, Professor Sue Grogan in Political Science works with pre-law students.

4. Pre-Medical and Other Health Sciences Students

Students intending to go to medical school, or to graduate school in one of the related health-sciences fields such as veterinary school, optometry school, dental school, public health or physical therapy programs, have a somewhat different situation. Beginning the process early is critical. Students should register to take the MCAT in the spring of their junior year. Because most medical schools require an institutional (corporate) letter of recommendation, they must also be interviewed by the College’s Health Sciences Advisory Committee; this committee is currently chaired by Professor Karen Crawford, in Biology. Most students use the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS), and must submit their applications in the summer between junior and senior years if they intend to go on to medical school right after graduation. Students interested in pre-med and other health-related field options should contact Dr. Crawford about their pre-health advising needs and they should attend meetings for pre-health professions. They should also join SMASH, a student club for those interested in health-related fields.
5. Writing Letters of Recommendation

One of the roles that a faculty member/adviser fills in the lives of students is to be a resource for writing letters of recommendation. Students will ask advisers and teachers to write letters of recommendation for a variety of activities. Two of the most common reasons for letters of recommendation are applications for jobs and applications for graduate or professional school.

If you are aware that an advisee is planning to take a few years between graduation from St. Mary’s and going to graduate school, you could recommend that they still approach professors for letters of recommendation now, and request that their professors keep these on file: faculty members who know their work will be able to write about it in more convincing detail while the student is fresh in their minds. Even if they send individualized recommendation requests for graduate school to their professors a few years hence, the professors who knew their work will have a letter draft to draw upon.

It would also be good advice to students to tell them to prepare a statement of their goals and plans to give to faculty members from whom they request letters of recommendation. If they have prepared a resume, they should also be advised to give that to their recommenders. The more detail letter writers have at their disposal about a student, the more convincing their letters can be.

It is a good idea to have students request letters of recommendation in writing. The Buckley Amendment allows disclosing student information (such as might be contained in a letter of recommendation) “to another school in which it understands that the student is currently enrolled, or seeks or intends to enroll.” The Buckley Amendment has no provision for disclosing academic information (such as would be contained in a letter of recommendation) to prospective employers. Therefore, it is good practice to keep in your files a student’s written (or e-mailed) request for such a letter.

6. Fellowship Information

Students who graduate from St. Mary’s College of Maryland are highly capable individuals, and they have benefited from an excellent liberal arts education from a public honors college. Yet our success in having students apply for and receive high-profile national and international fellowships is not as good as it should be. If you feel that one of your advisees is extremely capable, please refer him or her to the Office of Academic Services for information on national fellowship opportunities. Note that many of these fellowships require an institutional nomination, and that the numbers of students who may be nominated is limited. These nominations are made through the Associate Dean for Academic Services, usually after an interview on campus with a group of faculty members and administrators.
An Advisor’s Timeline, Month by Month

FALL TERM

August

1) During Friday of the afternoon of Orientation Weekend
   • Meet with new advisees.
     a) Get to know each other
     b) Outline the advisor’s role
     c) Alleviate anxieties about the upcoming semester
     d) Help with possible schedule changes
     e) Begin to think about a four-year plan.

2) During the first week of classes
   • Check schedules of students who are on probation.
     a) Confer with these students
     b) Ensure they’re working with Academic Services
     c) Chat about what went wrong the previous semester
     d) Make schedule adjustments if possible so they retake courses in which
        they received poor grades
     e) Determine strategies for success during the fall term.

   • Remind students who are applying for major scholarships such as the
     Fulbright or Rhodes that the deadlines come up quickly (early October),
     and encourage them to touch base with the Associate Dean for Academic
     Services

September

1) During the third week of classes –
   • Check in with new advisees.
     a) See how things are going both in classes and with life in general.
     b) Remind them of resources available for support, such as the Writing
        Center, Academic Services, tutoring through departments, their RAs,
        etc.
     c) Remind them to be on the lookout for information sessions regarding
        study abroad opportunities for the following year

   • E-mail all advisees to remind them to explore opportunities such as
     internships, resume-writing workshops, study abroad options, major
     scholarships with due dates in January or February
     a) Remind students of the need to study for the GREs, LSATs. (MCATs
        should be taken in spring term of one year for admission to medical
        school the following year – testing in S15 would be for admission in
        F16).
     b) Remind them of the services of the Career Development Center.
• Remind students with “I” grades that the deadline to remove an incomplete is approaching

**October**

1) During the second week  
• Remember to remove “I” grades from previous semester

2) During the third week  
• Remember to post mid-term deficiency grades even if students are about to submit a second assessment that might improve their grade, and even if you’ve been conferencing with students throughout the term to date. If students are struggling in more than one course, Academic Services targets them and cannot support them if their status isn’t known.

• Remind all advisees that Advising Day is approaching.  
  a) Begin to offer advising appointments  
  b) Remind advisees they do not have to wait for advising day to see you.  
  c) Give them suggestions about how to prepare for advising – bring courses that are of interest, check records, bring questions to consider and issues to address.

**November**

1) During Advising Day/Advising Appointments – With first year students  
• Make sure they know HOW to get registered.

• Make sure they know how to check their record for holds on their accounts and know to take care of such holds in order to register.

• Talk them through what to do if they can’t get a hold resolved in time to register; first year students in particular often don’t know the process for creating a schedule once the registration period has ended if it takes them that long to respond to a hold.

• Talk candidly about progress – review mid-term deficiencies, and discuss the possibility of withdrawing (which will cost 25.00 at this point in time), and make sure they know the deadline and process for withdrawing.

2) During Advising Day/Advising Appointments – With returning 2nd or 3rd year students  
• Talk candidly about progress – review mid-term deficiencies, and discuss the possibility of withdrawing (which will cost 25.00 at this point in time), and make sure they know the deadline and process for withdrawing. Remind them to use the catalogue to research other academic policies.
• Discuss internships and study abroad opportunities, major scholarships they might consider, summer work plans, career goals, goals for their remaining time at SMCM, what they’ve been excited about, what they’ve been involved with outside the classroom

3) During Advising Day/Advising Appointments – With seniors ready to graduate in May

• Discuss how to make the most of their last semester, and any possible hurdles to graduation students might be facing, discuss plans for life after SMCM, revisit their original “letter to advisor” and ask them how their experiences at college compared to their expectations

• Ask for their advice about advising and how you could be a more effective advisor in the future

**December**

1) During the first week – Check to ensure all advisees have schedules

• For those who don’t have schedules, connect to find out
  a) whether they’re taking a leave of absence or withdrawing, or
  b) whether they couldn’t register because of holds.

In the latter case, help them navigate the process of registering, and talk them through the add/drop process. Let them know how to be proactive about finding seats in courses by emailing professors and actually attending the first class session.

2) After grades have been submitted, check your advisees’ records.

• Send a congratulatory note if a student who has been struggling has improved.
• Send a note of concern to students who have done poorly.
• Pay special attention to students whose grades will require a schedule change for spring semester (if they failed a course, or failed to achieve a minimum grade), and offer to help them decide what changes to make.

**SPRING TERM**

**January**

1) During Friday of the afternoon of Orientation Weekend — Meet with new advisees.

• Get to know each other, outline the advisor’s role, alleviate anxieties about the upcoming semester, help with possible schedule changes, begin to think about a four-year plan.
• Note that many new advises will either be transfer students who really need to hit the ground running in order to graduate on time, or they’ll be students who had to prove themselves at community college in order to be accepted for the spring. Both groups need a bit of extra TLC.
2) During the first week of classes
   • Check schedules of students who are on probation after the fall term.
     a) Confer with these students
     b) Ensure they’re working with Academic Services
     c) Chat about what went wrong the previous semester
     d) Make schedule adjustments if possible so they retake courses in which
        they received poor grades
     e) Determine strategies for success during the spring term.

   • Remind students who are applying for major scholarships that the deadlines
     come up quickly, and encourage them to touch base with the Associate Dean
     for Academic Services

3) During the second week of classes
   • Remind students with “I” grades that the deadline to remove an incomplete
     is approaching

**February**
1) During the third week of classes –
   • Check in with new advisees
     a) See how things are going both in classes and with life in general.
     b) Remind them of resources available for support, such as the Writing
        Center, Academic Services, tutoring through departments, their RAs,
        etc.
     c) Remind them to be on the lookout for information sessions regarding
        study abroad opportunities for the following year

   • E-mail all advisees to remind them to explore opportunities such as
     internships, resume-writing workshops, study abroad options, major
     scholarships with due dates in January, February or March (Truman, Boren
     for intensive language study abroad, Jack Kent Cooke, etc.)
     a) Remind them of the services of the Career Development Center
     b) Remind them to take advantage of programming by IE as a way to learn
        more about study abroad opportunities

   • Remember to remove “I” grades from the previous semester

**March**
1) During the first week
   • Remember to post mid-term deficiency grades even if students are about to
     submit a second assessment that might improve their grade, and even if
you’ve been conferencing with students throughout the term to date. If students are struggling in more than one course, Academic Services targets them and cannot support them if their status isn’t known.

• Remind all advisees that Advising Day is approaching.
  a) Begin to offer advising appointments
  b) Remind advisees they do not have to wait for advising day to see you.
  c) Give them suggestions about how to prepare for advising – bring courses that are of interest, check records, bring questions to consider and issues to address.

2) During Advising Day/Advising Appointments – With first year students

• Make sure they’re secure in the registration process and are using technological tools to track their progress in completing requirements
• Discuss what they’re enjoying, what majors they might be considering and why, and how their core curriculum requirements are expanding their understanding of the world or of themselves

• Make sure they know how to check their record for holds on their accounts and know to take care of such holds in order to register.

• Talk them through what to do if they can’t get a hold resolved in time to register; first year students in particular often don’t know the process for creating a schedule once the registration period has ended if it takes them that long to respond to a hold.

• Talk candidly about progress – review mid-term deficiencies, and discuss the possibility of withdrawing (which will cost 25.00 at this point in time), and make sure they know the deadline and process for withdrawing.

3) During Advising Day/Advising Appointments – With returning 2nd or 3rd year students

• Talk candidly about progress – review mid-term deficiencies, and discuss the possibility of withdrawing (which will cost 25.00 at this point in time), and make sure they know the deadline and process for withdrawing. Remind them to use the catalogue to research other academic policies.

• Discuss internships and study abroad opportunities, major scholarships they might consider, summer work plans, career goals, goals for their remaining time at SMCM, what they’ve been excited about, what they’ve been involved with outside the classroom

• Have a conversation about the SMP or senior project option and talk with them about research papers or readings or activities in which they’ve been involved that could build into an SMP
4) Check in with your seniors about when they are presenting their SMPs – students like their advisors to be present if possible. Do a last-minute check-in to ensure that all graduation requirements are likely to be met.

April
1) During the first week – Check to ensure all advisees have schedules
   • For those who don’t have schedules, connect to find out
     a) whether they’re taking a leave of absence or withdrawing, or
     b) whether they couldn’t register because of holds.

   In the latter case, help them navigate the process of registering, and talk them through the add/drop process. Let them know how to be proactive about finding seats in courses by emailing professors and actually attending the first class session.
Six Things an Advisor/Mentor Can Do About Student Resistance

Here are 6 things an advisor can do to encourage a student to change, while averting a stalemate.

1) Lay out the desired behavior change in a calm, objective way.
Avoid sounding like a punishing parent or a preachy sermonizer. Simply discuss the academic need and the impact that the change will have on the person’s development and leave out the judgmental voice. If you get too critical or dogmatic, you set yourself up for a negative reaction.

2) Acknowledge the student’s ambivalence about making the change.
Let them know you recognize how hard it can be to make this change and you appreciate the difficulty of this challenge. Volunteer any strategies you might have used in the past to overcome your own barriers or offer to brainstorm together how to defeat the obstacles. After that, give them space to figure out how they will solve their problem and make the necessary adjustments and set a timetable for following up.

3) Continue to hold the person accountable for their class performance.
Despite any manipulations or sidetracks the person may throw your way, continue to hold your ground that this is a vital aspect of their academic performance and their work will need to be up to standard. If you accept mediocre or inconsistent results, you will be lowering the bar for that student and for yourself.

4) Confront the person on their resistance when you see it or hear it.
If you observe the person “acting out,” don’t sweep it under the rug. Privately call them over, let them know what you observed and give them an opportunity to share what’s going on. When people feel they can talk through their discomforts in a safe environment, they are more likely to give up some of their “armor” and bring themselves to a less emotional, more rational way of viewing their situation.

5) Put the ball in their court.
Let the student know you care about them and their development, but that you cannot do this for them. Clearly lay out the goal, offer support, coach them through the transition, but ultimately, it will be up to them to do it or not. If they believe that this is all your agenda, the focus will become about you. If they like you, they might do it; if not, they might resist more. Take yourself and your personal agenda out of the middle and leave the decision and the responsibility in the person’s own hands.

6) Celebrate success.
Ken Blanchard, of One Minute Manager fame, says to catch people doing things right. In the beginning, even when people approximate the correct behavior, they should be positively reinforced. If you see acceptable progress, don’t give up on the student and you’ll teach them not to give up on themselves, either.

The long-term answer lies in maintaining the delicate balance between respecting your advisee’s resistance while still expecting them to make the change. The respect/expect juggling act allows you to support the human face of change without compromising the rigorous academic demands of the situation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>E-mail Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Services</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:academicservices@smcm.edu">academicservices@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Stabile</td>
<td><a href="mailto:drstabile@smcm.edu">drstabile@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Admissions</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:admissions@smcm.edu">admissions@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Sherman, Dean</td>
<td><a href="mailto:glsherman@smcm.edu">glsherman@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Athletics and Recreation</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:swdevine@smcm.edu">swdevine@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Devine, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Office</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:dkadkins@smcm.edu">dkadkins@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbi Adkins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Store</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:rtwagner@smcm.edu">rtwagner@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Wagner, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Development Center</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:careercenter@smcm.edu">careercenter@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Burke, Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dlburke@smcm.edu">dlburke@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Curriculum</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:corecurriculum@smcm.edu">corecurriculum@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libby Williams (First Year Seminars)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:enwilliams@smcm.edu">enwilliams@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Feingold (All other Core Req')</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rpfeingold@smcm.edu">rpfeingold@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counseling Services</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kkbishop@smcm.edu">kkbishop@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Bishop, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Aid</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:nlhutton@smcm.edu">nlhutton@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadine Hutton, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Center</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:llwallace@smcm.edu">llwallace@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Wallace, RN, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Technology</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:helpdesk@smcm.edu">helpdesk@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Gass, Asst. VP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International Education</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mreining@smcm.edu">mreining@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandy Reinig, Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Registrar</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:nbtulley@smcm.edu">nbtulley@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Tulley, Registrar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residence Life (Housing)</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jagoldwater@smcm.edu">jagoldwater@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne Goldwater, Associate Dean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Activities</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kjschroeder@smcm.edu">kjschroeder@smcm.edu</a></td>
<td>240-895-4209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Schroeder, Asst Dean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>