B.S. Liberal Studies: Professional Studies
West Chester University

Academic Advising Syllabus

Advisor/Director: Professor Bruce Norris
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Website:
http://www.wcupa.edu/viceProvost/interdisciplinaryStudies/professionalStudies/

Social Media: Facebook: wcu professional studies
Twitter: @ProfStudiesWCU

Other resources:
Undergraduate Catalog
Student Handbook (see below)
myWCU portal
University Website

Office Hours:
Appointments preferred; call the office to schedule one
Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 noon, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m.- 12 noon
Other times as available will be announced

Required for Academic Advising in Professional Studies

1. An official WCU email account, which is checked frequently. Important academic information is distributed via the WCU email account. You are held accountable for all of this information. If you don't check your email and miss important notifications and you find yourself in a difficult situation because of it, that will be a problem that may not be easily corrected, if at all. Failure to read your email does not excuse any mistakes made in your academic planning and execution. You are a member of the WCU community of scholars. We use WCU email addresses for our communications. Please do not use any email account other than your WCU email when communicating with any WCU offices, including Professional Studies.
2. Access to the current WCU Undergraduate Catalog, which contains all academic policies and major requirements to which you will be held. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the catalog, although your advisor serves as a resource for understanding and finding particular policies. Find your catalog at [http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/](http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/)

3. Access to your Degree Progress Report (DPR). The DPR is an individualized report that shows which general education and major requirements have been completed and which ones remain. It also reviews your credit summary and current cumulative grade point average, as well as advising comments which are added from time to time. **You should review your DPR prior to your advising meeting.** Use the link found on your myWCU home page. Any questions/concerns, please discuss at your advising appointment.

### Specific Policies and Procedures regarding Professional Studies Academic Advising

1. All Professional Studies students will be included on an email distribution list of program majors, using your WCU email account. You will receive important information regarding course enrollment, academic advising issues, office hour modification, and other items of importance. Students are responsible for reading all messages sent from either the Program Director or his office manager to your WCU email account, and to follow up on messages as needed. Accommodations are not made for students who miss information that was sent to their WCU email accounts.

2. Each Professional Studies student is required to meet with their academic advisor at least once a semester. **Ideally, this meeting should take place about one week prior to the day and time assigned to begin your course registration date.** Of course, students may and should meet with their academic advisor when needed.

3. Each student has an Advisor Hold placed on their account automatically by the University records systems. This hold prevents unauthorized access to your scheduling functions. Your major academic advisor will remove the hold during the advising session which should occur prior to the assigned scheduling date.

4. Students are responsible for tracking each semester’s/term’s important dates. Search the Academic Calendar, found on the Registrar’s website, for these dates.

### University Mission Statement for Academic Advising

The West Chester University community embraces the concept that effective academic advising is a collaborative teaching and learning process between the student and the faculty advisor. Effective advising should assist the student in achieving their academic, professional and personal goals. Faculty advisors will strive to provide accurate, timely and current information, thus establishing the framework around which students will construct their academic program of study.
Academic Advising Description/Definition

Academic advising is an educational process that, by intention and design, facilitates students’ understanding of the meaning and purpose of higher education and fosters their intellectual and personal development toward academic success and lifelong learning. (NACADA, 2004)

Academic Advising for the Professional Studies

Academic Advising is a critical component in the successful completion of any degree program. The Liberal Studies: Professional Studies program of study is as unique and varied as the individual students who pursue the major. As a result, regular consultation with your academic advisor becomes essential.

The academic advisor’s role is to make certain that the requirements for the major are clearly explained to the student. However, the academic advisor’s role goes beyond this simple function. Your advisor:

- serves as a sounding board for the student as they prepare and execute their academic plan;
- serves as a source of information about university academic policies and procedures; and
- serves as a resource to discuss and investigate options available to the students after graduation.

As a result of successful academic advising and the student’s active involvement in the process, the student is empowered to make informed decisions about their program of study and their academic plan. In essence, the student takes ownership of his or her educational experience. **Ultimately, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all requirements for the degree are met in order to graduate.**

Responsibilities of the Academic Advisor include:

- Assist the student as they develop their academic program of study by:
  - Exploring with students their individual interests, abilities and goals;
  - Aiding students in the creation of an academic plan;
  - Counsel students in the selection and sequencing of courses that meet the various degree requirements;
- Identify university resources that may be of value to the student and make appropriate referrals; and
- Be aware of university academic policies and procedures as they relate to the needs of the student.
Responsibilities of the Student in the Academic Advising relationship include:

- Meet with your advisor at appropriate times during the semester;
- Be aware of important, relevant deadlines and then meet them;
- Complete all forms and submit them to the appropriate offices in a timely manner;
- Review university policies and procedures as needed;
- Develop and clarify the values and goals that impact your academic decisions;
- Create an academic plan for your remaining semesters;
- Understand the requirements for the major and minors;
- Understand the university general education requirement;
- Have knowledge of the Undergraduate Catalog;
- Examine your academic record for accuracy on a regular basis. Make sure if a course is added, dropped or not completed successfully that you let your advisor know so that your advising sheet can be updated.
- Save all academic advising and course registration related documents;
- Be aware of prerequisites for the course you plan to take;
- Provide to the Registrar’s office the official transcripts for courses taken at other institutions in a timely manner;
- Recognize the need for student resources and services on campus and use them; and
- Ask questions when needed.
- If you receive Financial Aid, please be aware of the deadlines and other rules regarding your Aid if you make schedule changes. Any questions, contact the Financial Aid Department at 610-436-2627.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes for the Advising Experience

Through the academic advising experiences in this program,

- Students will demonstrate the ability to make effective decisions concerning their degree and career goals.
- Students will develop an educational plan for successfully achieving their goals and select courses each semester to progress toward fulfilling that educational plan.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the value of the general education requirement.
- Students will utilize the resources and services on campus to assist them in achieving their academic, personal and career goals.
- Students will make use of referrals to campus resources as needed.
- Students will graduate in a timely and efficient manner based upon their educational plan.
Demonstrating Your Achievement of Student Learning Outcomes

In order for you and your advisor to accurately measure and document that you have achieved the learning outcomes listed above, the advisor and student will collectively contribute to the student’s major file, to be maintained by the advisor. This file will include a variety of documents such as the educational plan for the student, semester schedules and displays of academic progress, information regarding usage of campus resources, copies of relevant correspondence and other documents of note.

A graduation portfolio is to be submitted at the conclusion of the student’s final semester of study. The portfolio consists of a resume, a writing sample (usually a paper submitted in one of the student’s minor courses), and a reflection paper in which the student discusses various aspects of his/her college journey. Detailed guidelines for the submission of the portfolio will be distributed early in the student’s final semester. They may also be found in the student handbook.

Major Academic Advising

Academic advising for the Liberal Studies: Professional Studies student begins at the initial meeting between the student and the Program Director. At that time, the program will be explained and the courses taken by the student will be incorporated into the program advising sheet. There will be a discussion about the need for two academic minors, and options for these will be explored. The advisor and student will also discuss the student’s short-term and long-term goals. Change of Major and Minor Application forms will be issued at that time.

Students are expected to use the information they receive at this meeting to develop an academic plan. The plan should include the minors they wish to pursue, the courses they want to take, and a tentative timeline to degree completion.

The student should meet with their advisor at least once a semester. Ideally, that meeting should take place before the student’s enrollment appointment for the upcoming semester. At that meeting, the student’s progress toward degree completion is evaluated, the student’s academic plan is reviewed and modified as needed, and their proposed course selection is examined.

Students are encouraged to consult their advisor at any time they have a question, or want to address an issue of concern. That consultation may take place via telephone, email or office visit. Please note that email communications should not be considered as confidential. Please exercise appropriate levels of caution. Do not include information such as identifying numbers (social security #, etc.), grades, GPA, etc.
The Student Handbook

A student handbook has been created for your benefit. It can be found online at the following web address:


Please review it as soon as possible upon admission to the Professional Studies major to become familiar with its contents. Make use of it as a valuable resource to assist you as you navigate your way through your remaining undergraduate semesters. Pay particular attention to the FAQ section.

If you have any questions about any item you find in the handbook, please be sure to ask your major advisor.

The Interdisciplinary Degree

The Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies: Professional Studies is an interdisciplinary program. Interdisciplinary degrees have grown in popularity across American higher education over the recent past decades. Typically, the student is charged with developing a rationale that delineates the relationship that exists between the minors and how the pursuit of the degree will serve the student during their undergraduate career and beyond the walls of the university. Our students will begin this process during the intake process, and will revise and update their plans accordingly.

Minor Advisors

Students in the Liberal Studies: Professional Studies major are required to earn two academic minors as part of the degree requirements. Students can add the minors via MyWCU (on their home page, center column, “Change Plan," “Add Minor"). Once your request is submitted online, it will be sent electronically to the minor department who each have their own process of admitting students into their minors. Any questions about their process, please contact the respective minors (contact names should have been given to you at your advising appointment). Students may choose to pursue more than two minors; however, any minors that appear on your formal academic program must be completed in order to earn your degree. Upon acceptance to the minor, students should request an appointment to discuss minor requirements and course options. Every department is different; however, a minor advisor should be officially assigned to the student. If you are unsure who your minor advisor is, contact the department chair and ASK. Often, the department chair will serve in this capacity. It is the student's responsibility to meet with their minor advisors. The student is responsible for completing all minor requirements. Students who fail to consult their minor advisors are accountable for any mistakes/omissions made in pursuing that minor.
Safe Zone

The faculty and staff of the Professional Studies program are committed to providing an environment which is inclusive of, open to, respectful and supportive of all students. We are pleased to provide our services to students of all ages, genders, races, cultures, abilities, sexual orientations, religious backgrounds and socio-economic statuses.

We strive to make everyone feel welcome and important, because you are welcome to visit with us and you are important to us.

Assistance with Issues of Disability.

West Chester University will make every effort to assure students with disabilities access to all classes required for their program of study and will endeavor to remove any and all obstacles to a fulfilling, comprehensive university experience. This policy extends to the academic advising process. Students with unique needs should discuss those needs with their academic advisor.

Students should contact the Office for Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 223 Lawrence Center to arrange suitable accommodations. They can be reached at 610.436.2564.

In case of emergency, or suspicious activity, please contact WCU Public Safety at 610.436.3311. You should also subscribe to WCU Alert for timely information regarding campus safety which is texted to your cell phone. Search WCU Alert on the university website.