Preparing for Advising Appointments

To have productive and valuable conversations with faculty advisors, students need to prepare for their advising appointments. Students should be prepared to discuss:

- Personal and academic interests
- Personal and academic goals at Rice
- Academic background and preparedness for courses (or progress towards degree)
- Previous study habits and time management
- Commitments and balance of curricular/extracurricular activities
- Written and developed (and/or modified) academic plans
- Choices, questions, and issues about their plans
- Referrals to advisors of specialties and other resources
- Arrangements for follow-up communications

Students should be ready to discuss all of these during their first appointment with a divisional advisor and during subsequent meetings with any faculty advisor (divisional or major). Candid conversations about each will significantly influence the development of a successful academic plan.

For new students, numerous academic advising events are coordinated during O-Week to assist with preparation for divisional advising appointments. Masters present an “Introduction to Academics at Rice”, divisional advisors address generalities of their respective academic divisions, students attend academic fairs and lunches, and PAA and upperclassmen host academic planning sessions. The combination of events provides comprehensive information about Rice’s general curriculum, academic rules and regulations, departmental majors and course offerings, and educational opportunities outside the classroom. The events also allow students to gather multiple perspectives and expand their network of advisors to the entire advising community. By Wednesday afternoon of O-Week, each new student should feel thoroughly prepared for their individual divisional advisor appointment.

To facilitate discussions during divisional advising appointments, answers to new student academic advising questionnaires as well as basic information about each student’s academic background are distributed to advisors in advance. Divisional advisors understand that answers to questionnaires are not final because most students develop new interests and/or change goals when greater educational opportunities are introduced. To demonstrate preparedness for their faculty advising appointments, students should bring the following:

- List of personal and academic interests and goals
- Academic plan for the semester with alternatives (see Academic Planning document)
- List of questions about their academic plan and other opportunities
- Tentative academic plan for future semesters (see Academic Planning document)
- E-CAPP degree audit (for upperclassmen only; available via ESTHER)
- Copy of unofficial transcript (for upperclassmen only; available via ESTHER)

In subsequent semesters, taking full advantage of advising opportunities and preparation for appointments requires greater initiative and independence. All advisors are still available through the residential colleges and academic departments, and most information is available through the General Announcements and departmental web sites. Students should do some independent research to periodically revisit curricular requirements, policies, and deadlines. Ultimately, the goal should be to complete an academic plan that represents the Rice holistic undergraduate experience.

If you have any questions, contact the Office of Academic Advising at x4060 or aadv@rice.edu.