SAS Academic Advising

Academic Advising is an opportunity to exchange information designed to help students reach their educational and career goals. Advising is a shared responsibility between an adviser and the student. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the student to make decisions about his/her life goals by creating a plan to reach those goals.

The SAS Office of Academic Services assists in this process by helping the student understand options, determine resources and, when necessary, identify alternatives.

Goals of Academic Advising include:

- Providing students with information and resources so they understand academic requirements, policies, procedures, and how to graduate in a timely manner
- Showcasing university resources that enhance educational plans, including referrals to major departments, Career Services, Learning Centers, and other university units
- Teaching students to weigh academic choices and develop a personalized educational plan

Modes of Academic Advising:

**Appointments**
- 20 deans each hold 20 appointments a week.
- On average, 1500 appointments are available each month, with up to 2200 per month during registration time.
- **Appointments are available on all four campuses.**

**Emails**
- Each dean responds to individual student inquiries.
- Group email boxes are used for specific topics (first years, seniors, academic standing, transfer, school to school transfer, reenrollment).

**Outreach Programming**
- Various programs are sponsored by the Office of Academic Services and in partnership with other offices where deans provide academic advising outside the Advising Centers.
- Deans routinely participate in nontraditional work hour (evening and weekend) events.

**Dean on Duty**
- There is a dean available in person at SAS Advising Centers on all four campuses Monday-Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm unless the University is closed.
- This service is for quick questions, referrals, form submission, and registration changes.

**Phone Calls**
- Full-time staff and deans are available to answer student questions by phone.
- Confidential academic information is not provided over the phone so as to ensure the identity of the student.

**Emerging Technologies**
- Deans communicate with students through blogs, Sakai, Twitter, and Facebook
- Deans provide Live Chat online (instant messaging) during registration.

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**SAS Student Statistics for 2012**

- 20,253 undergraduates registered Fall 2012
- 3,732 new first year students
- 2,510 new transfer students
- 1,652 reenrolled students
- 598 school-to-school transfer students
- 4,915 seniors graduated
While computer systems assist with the process, deans individually determine and record each transcript adjustment. This is a manual process.

All 20 deans have responsibility for processes to ensure that student records remain accurate and that students are notified of any transcript change. These instances of academic record maintenance are an integral part of the advising process.

Ensuring the Accuracy of Student Records of All SAS Students

- **20,253**
  Complete Transcript Reviews in 2012
- **4,101**
  Degree Navigator degree audit edits made by Academic Services staff in 2012
- **13,210**
  Repeated and Equivalent Courses reviewed in 2012
- **3,333**
  Transfer Credit Preapprovals (for continuing students) reviewed in 2012
- **1,106**
  Transfer Credit Departmental Reevaluations in 2012 (to give a more specific transfer course equivalent)
- **2,380**
  AP Score Reports processed in 2012
- **18,478**
  Senior Certifications for the Class of 2012 (6,821 gen eds, 7,167 major, 4,490 minor)

Quotes from students who benefitted from Academic Advising:

"Sometimes it takes someone to listen, to guide us and to be the one who gives us a reality check. Because of your great advising I am pleased where my career is going right now, and I thank you for all your assistance but mostly for encouraging me to follow my passion."

"Your words and encouragement mean so much to me. You not only spoke to my future endeavors but you also showed me that you do genuinely care about your students as far as their success at Rutgers. I was able to relate to you which made me more comfortable with talking to you and it ultimately helped me to make my decision about what I want to do."

Recruitment Activities

- **Open House**
  For admitted first year and transfer students
- **Scholars Day**
  For students admitted into the SAS Honors Program
- **High School Programs**
  For high school students considering Rutgers
- **Rutgers Day**
  For the public to learn about what Rutgers is all about

General Advising and Outreach Programs

- **Major Fair**
  Two events per year with over 70 departments, programs, and schools at each: 1,403 students attended in 2012.
- **Residence Hall Registration Advising**
  Deans visit all first year residence halls for evening registration advising in the fall semester.
- **Academic Success Seminar**
  Course designed to assist first year students with poor GPAs after their first semester at Rutgers.
- **FIGS Presentations**
  Deans visit First Year Interest Group Seminars to review academic requirements and registration.
- **Learning Community Programs**
  Deans visit Learning Communities to review academic requirements and registration.
- **Students in Transition Seminar**
  All deans teach at least two seminars per year to first semester SAS transfer students.

General Advising and Outreach Programs are offered to SAS students (and, in some cases, to students from outside SAS as well) in locations other than the four SAS Advising Centers.
### Advising and Services Targeted at Specific Populations

#### First Year Students
- Academic Planning and Advising (APA) Day
- Processing of Advanced Placement (AP) Credit
- Processing of Transfer Credits taken in High School
- Residence Hall Registration Advising

#### Transfer Students
- Students in Transition Advising and Registration (STAR) Day
- Students in Transition Seminar (STS)
- Transfer Credit Evaluation (current and transfer students)
- NJTransfer Maintenance
- Transfer Mentors
- Transfer Mentor Peer Instructor Education Course
- Transfer Student Learning Community
- Tau Sigma Honor Society
- Advising and Registration for School to School Transfers (students transferring to SAS from other Rutgers units)

#### Seniors
- Senior Sakai
- Departmental Outreach
- Senior Certifications
- Graduation and Commencement
- Post-graduation Advising

#### Academic Standing
- Academic Standing Review (Warning, Probation, Dismissal, Amnesty, Readmission)
- Probation Advising
- Dismissal Advising
- Faculty Committee on Academic Standing
- Freshman Retention Program
- Academic Success Seminar
- Dean's List
- Class Rank
- Dean's Recommendation Letters

#### Nontraditional Students and Special Populations
- Committee work with Outside Offices (Disability Services, Athletics, etc.)
- Special Registration Accommodations
- Reenrollment
- Individualized Services for Special Populations
- Registration Program for Second Baccalaureate Degree Students
APA Days are designed for incoming first year students at SAS to select their first-semester courses with advising assistance from professional staff and faculty.

For the 2012-2013 academic year:

- 3,711 first year students were registered for fall courses
- 3,655 students submitted a course request form
- Students participated in one of three versions of the APA program
- Five Comprehensive APA Day Programs are run each year

Goals of the APA Day Programs include:

- Assisting students in making well-informed decisions about their coursework, leading to timely graduation
- Meeting with students in person to answer individual questions and provide advising resources, encouraging the continued use of professional academic advising
- Encouraging students to participate in programs designed to enhance the first year experience
- Promoting faculty engagement with first year students

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**First Year Student Methods of Selecting Fall Courses in 2012**

![Pie chart showing methods of selecting fall courses in 2012](chart.png)

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**Students Who Attended a Comprehensive APA Day Program in 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt prepared to make well-informed decisions while completing the course request form</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke directly to a professional adviser about course selection and had questions answered</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found the Exploratory Session successful in broadening knowledge of the special academic opportunities (Byrne Seminars, FIGS, Learning Communities, etc.)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Effectiveness of Comprehensive APA Day Programs in Student Selection of First Year Interest Group Seminars (FIGS) and Byrne Seminars for First Year Students in 2012**

![Bar chart showing effectiveness of APA Day Programs](chart.png)
Quotes from faculty who attended a Comprehensive APA Day Program:

“Aside from providing insight about specific courses or issues, [the APA Day Program] is also a great opportunity for [incoming students] to begin making connections with faculty members. I think that’s especially useful in a university as big as Rutgers.”

“I particularly enjoyed the eagerness and excitement of the new students.”

“I had a great time! I talked to the students about why they ought to take an English/lit course... it was a lively and engaged group.”
The Students in Transition Seminar (STS) is a course that provides an in-depth introduction to Rutgers for first-semester transfer students in SAS.

Topics in this course are designed to assist students in their adjustment to Rutgers and to facilitate successful academic performance during this transition. It is graded on a pass/no credit basis.

Goals of the STS are:

- To facilitate the process of helping transfer students connect to Rutgers and to encourage them to become active and responsible members of the Rutgers community.
- To introduce students to the resources available and information necessary for timely graduation and academic success.
- To develop a sense of community among transfer students.
All students who are enrolled in the STS complete the Passport, which introduces students to various academic and social experiences available at Rutgers. All students are required to complete the Passport, which includes participating in at least seven events, in order to receive a passing grade in the STS.

Quotes from students who participated in the STS:

“The passport was my connection to others, it was the ‘oh your new here too? I’m really not alone?’ sign. I met so many friends by finding out a classmate had a passport event to do too.”

“When I got to Rutgers it felt like everyone had already made friends and the size of the University was too huge; if it wasn’t for my STS class I don’t know how I would have made it through that first semester. I got answers to important questions, inside tips on surviving the chaos that is transferring, and it was my safe space once a week where I spent time with other students in the same position I was in. Most importantly I met my closest friends because we noticed each other’s passport books in classes and had an immediate connection.”

Students entering SAS with an Associate’s Degree approved by the New Jersey Statewide Transfer Agreement (NJSWTA) are deemed to have completed the first two years of a four-year degree at a NJ community college. These students come in with 60 credits and are deemed to have completed all general education requirements at their community colleges. Looking at 2-year graduation rates for these students is analogous to looking at the 4-year graduation rates for traditional first year students.
SAS First Year Retention Programs

The First Year Retention Programs are a system of retention management measures focused on working with first year students most in need of academic guidance and support as determined by their first semester performance.

There are two programs:

- Freshman Retention Program
- Academic Success Seminar

All students eligible are enrolled in one of the two programs in the spring semester of their first year.

Goals of the First Year Retention Programs include:

- Increasing the first year to sophomore year persistence rate for students with the most severe academic standing deficiencies after a first semester of enrollment
- Working with students identified as being at risk, using a professional assessment tool to determine specific risk factors, and making direct connections with specifically-targeted resources at Rutgers based on those risk factors

Freshman Retention Program

This program matches up students identified as academically at-risk (first term GPA 0.000-0.999) with an appropriate advisor based on the results of a professional assessment tool, the College Student Inventory (CSI) survey.

Students in the program have several requirements, including the CSI, four advising meetings, and an Academic Conference (a large event for all students in the program.)

Academic Success Seminar

This is a seven-week seminar series with guest speakers designed to support students who are experiencing academic difficulty (first term GPA 1.00-1.35). A small subset of students is chosen each year to participate.

Through assessment, education, and advising, students learn to identify and resolve the underlying causes of their academic difficulty.
Advising students in the Freshman Retention Program is a shared responsibility accomplished by a voluntary collective of Rutgers support staff from diverse units, referred to as the SAS Retention Advising Board.

Quotes from students who benefitted from First Year Retention Programs:

“I think the most helpful part out of [the Freshman Retention Program] was the advisor. Although there are people like that throughout the campuses who are hired to speak with students like myself, it was never an easy step to take for me, until of course I was forced to do it.”

“I am satisfied about the program in general, and I am glad I didn’t take it for granted. It helped me learn to speak up and ask questions about my education. So basically this program kind of helped me through a blossoming period.”

“...by meeting with the advisor, I had to effectively break down and understand what went wrong last semester and really look at how to make things better, which I have been doing. Therefore my progress this semester has been tremendous because I am learning to balance everything together and be consistently effective.”