



Instructional Guide for MSU Faculty

2nd Revised Edition
(2007)

MSU

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Section 11

Advising

Academic advising has the potential to strongly influence the retention and development of university students. Through regular interactions with students, advisors can gain meaningful information about students' academic and personal experiences, abilities, and needs. These insights can be used to help students successfully connect to their academic community and develop appropriate academic and career goals, while fostering an appreciation of life-long learning. Students place a great deal of trust in their advisors. That trust warrants that students receive dependable, accurate, respectful, honest, and professional advice.

MSU

The section on undergraduate advising was prepared by Diane Donnelly, Pat Lane, and Mary Noll from University Studies. The section on graduate advising was prepared by Jennifer Miller from the Division of Graduate Education.

Academic Advising: A Definition*

Advising is a dynamic process for obtaining the critical information students need to make the most important decisions about college; decisions affecting academic majors, career goals, elective courses, secondary fields of study, and co-curricular activities and life planning. Advising is an integral part of teaching; it is the opportunity to encourage students to engage in a systematic, strategic planning process and to take responsibility for their personal and professional development. The strength of academic advising lies in the commitment of faculty and professional advisors to serve as mentors, to be accessible, and to be a source of information and encouragement in the advising process. Academic intellectual and developmental needs of the students are considered. (Adapted from Crockett, 1985, "Academic Advising")

National Academic
Advising Association
(NACADA)
www.nacada.ksu.edu

There are probably as many definitions of academic advising as there are advisors. Some advisors are comfortable addressing, or at least acknowledging, the broad range of events in students' lives that may impact their academic performance, while others prefer their interactions be strictly focused on academic goals and requirements. Certainly an advisor's responsibility includes an interest in students' needs, availability, knowledge of university policies, procedures and requirements, academic requirements and opportunities in the curriculum, the career connections of the discipline, and current information on referral resources available to students.

Students also have an important role in ensuring the success of the advising process. They must take responsibility for their own learning, keep track of curriculum requirements, initiate contacts with advisors or other appropriate members of the academic community, keep appointments, and arrive at advising conferences prepared.

Statement of Purpose and Goals for Academic Advising

The primary purpose of an academic advising program is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans that are compatible with their life goals.

Goals for academic advising include:

- Development of suitable educational plans
- Clarification of career and life goals
- Selection of appropriate courses and other educational experiences
- Interpretation of institutional requirements
- Enhancement of student awareness about educational resources available (e.g., internships, study abroad, honors, and learning assistance programs)
- Evaluation of student progress toward established goals
- Development of decision making skills
- Reinforcement of student self direction
- Referral to and use of institutional and community support services
- Collection and distribution of data regarding student needs, preferences, and performance for use in making institutional decisions and policy

Academic Advising at MSU-Bozeman

Academic advising at MSU has traditionally been the role of the faculty in the colleges (declared students) and professional advisors in University Studies (undeclared students). Some colleges and departments have their own advising centers where students can make initial contact and obtain general information regarding coursework and departmental policies. The Academic Advising Center, located in University Studies, also serves as a source of advising information for core courses, for students transitioning between majors, or for academic enhancement (e.g., minors, National Student Exchange, etc.). A list of "Campus Resources for Advisors and Students" is included at the end of this chapter.

MSU Personnel: Advising Responsibilities

Assistant Deans

- Coordinate advising in the college
- Take care of all student-related matters not settled in the department
- Arbitrate grievances when they reach the college level
- Represent college/handle scholastics, graduation, etc
- Serves as professional advisors

Faculty and Professional Advisors

- Academic advising for course selection and major requirements
- Connect students with faculty for course and curriculum information
- Connect students to academic and student services and resources, e.g., Writing Center, ASMSU tutoring, TRIO student support services, etc.
- Provide expertise on career related fields and internship possibilities
- Instruction
- Research
- Service

Students

- Make and keep appointments with advisors, professors, etc.
- Give thoughtful consideration to courses, program and future plans before meeting advisors
- Keep advisors informed of changes in their program and/or objectives
- Thoughtfully consider an advisor's recommendation with an open mind and be willing to discuss differing views
- Ask for help when needed
- Accept responsibility for their actions

Academic Advising Needs of Different Student Populations

Entering First Year Students

The first year of college is often a period of great transition and adjustment; it is the most critical phase of college student advising. The first six weeks are especially vital in terms of academic and social integration.

Ways to help freshman students:

- Inform students of advisor's name, office location and hours, email, etc.
- Orient students to degree program and related careers
- Inform students of related career opportunities
- Inform students of university and curriculum deadlines
- Inform students of pertinent campus resources
- Assist students in formulating educational and career goals

Continuing Students

Sophomores and Juniors are more comfortable with college procedures and are less concerned with the basic issues of scheduling. They are beginning to think more concretely about their career/occupational goals and are eager to integrate their academic plans with these goals. For many students, this is a time when they consider changing majors, "stopping out," or dropping out altogether. Many transfer students also arrive as sophomores.

Ways to help continuing students:

- Encourage student engagement, interest and excitement about the learning process and areas of study
- Assist students in assessing progress in core curriculum and degree program
- Discuss curricular enrichment, e.g., minors and exchange programs
- Provide information on activities, internships, etc.; how to integrate theoretical and practical competencies
- Advise students of catalog declaration, upper division credits, total credits required for graduation, GPA requirements
- Inform students of professional organizations, campus organizations, internship opportunities
- Be supportive of students reevaluating major choice

Seniors

The capstone year of college is one that ideally integrates intellectual and social experiences as students prepare to move beyond their undergraduate education into further schooling or "the real world."

Ways to help seniors:

- Review requirements for graduation (core, graduation application, degree program and upper division requirements)
- Discuss career direction and recommending a visit to Career Services (SUB 125)
- Inform students of job opportunities (campus recruiting, interviewing skills, and resume development)
- Provide resources on resume writing, interviewing, and job searching
- If relevant, discuss and make preparations for graduate school

Advising Considerations, Legalities, Ethics

As an advisor, it is your responsibility to...

1. Be available for and to become good at advising
2. Be properly informed: look it up, ask, keep current
3. Refer rather than counsel
4. Keep good records of all exchanges with each student in an active file
5. Keep your door open, keep "at arms length," and abide by intellectual property, consensual relationship, and other laws and policies
6. Maintain confidentiality for all records and communications (unless it is of an emergency nature and then notify appropriate authorities)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 grants certain rights, privileges, and protections related to students' educational records maintained by the University. Students' educational records (with the exception of directory information) will not be released to third parties outside of the University (including parents and guardians), except with the written consent of the student. Students have the right to inspect their own educational records, unless they have waived that right (e.g., graduate school recommendations, etc.). (MSU Bulletin 2006-2008, p. 59)

For more information refer to the National Academic Advising Association Website:
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/>.

Advising Information

University Degree Components

- **CORE 2.0 requirements** - The mission of CORE 2.0 is to enhance students' use of multiple perspectives in making informed critical and ethical judgments in their personal, public, and professional lives through inquiry and research experiences. CORE 2.0 was introduced in Fall 2004.
- **DEGREE requirements** - The courses required for a particular major and/or minor as outlined in the MSU-Bulletin. (See specific majors under department listings.)
- **SUPPORTIVE requirements** - These courses include prerequisites and foundation courses required for majors and minors.
- **Restricted and non-restricted ELECTIVE requirements** - Courses that are not required for a major or minor. The number of required electives varies by degree.

Board of Regents Minimum Grade Policy

Overview of New Policy (effective Fall 2005)

- A “C-” or better must be achieved for all courses except free electives. This includes core courses, required courses in majors and minors, and pre-requisite courses.
- A “D” will be considered a passing grade only for lower division free electives. Free electives are defined as any credits that count toward the 120 total degree requirement and are not required for core, major, minor, or upper division requirements.
- This policy does not affect students who entered the Montana University System prior to Fall 2005 and have been continuously enrolled (no break in enrollment of more than 2 consecutive semesters, including summer).
- Former MSU students who have not attended MSU for 12 months or more are impacted by this policy. Previously earned D and D+ grades will not apply in meeting graduation requirements, unless an exception is granted.
- Transfer coursework for transfer students entering MSU Fall 2005 or thereafter must meet the C- requirement to count as anything but free electives.
- Departments still have the authority to grant individual exceptions to this policy with respect to departmental requirements, including prerequisites. For other appeals (upper division, previous catalogs, core requirements, etc.) students should contact their Assistant/Associate Dean or the Registrar’s Office.
- If you encounter a specific situation not covered here, please contact Jeff Adams (994-7835; jadams@montana.edu) to discuss.

Core 2.0

Core 2.0 was introduced at MSU in Fall 2004. The mission, goals, and general course categories are described in Section 4. The detailed curricular requirements are found at <http://www.montana.edu/wwwcat/requirements/reqs4.html>, in the MSU course catalog. A core worksheet can be downloaded from the Advising Center website at <http://www.montana.edu/wwwgs/advising.html>.

Detailed information on
CORE 2.0 at
www.montana.edu/core2

It is important to understand that, unlike departmental requirements, decisions about substitutions for core requirements cannot be made at the departmental level. Decisions about how transfer coursework will count toward core requirements are made by transfer evaluators in consultation with appropriate departmental faculty. Core designations are listed explicitly on transfer credits when they appear on the MSU transcript. Appeals of specific core requirements are initiated by students. If you have a student who believes that either transfer coursework has not been given appropriate credit for core or that some unique combination of coursework and other experience has allowed the student to achieve a specific core area objective, the student should contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate an appeal.

CORE 2.0 is structured around five foundation courses, four Ways of Knowing courses, and a Research & Creative Experience course, which may also satisfy a particular Ways of Knowing category.

Foundation Courses

Students complete one course in each of the following areas:

- *University Seminar (US)* – Seminars are designed for first-year students to provide an introduction to college studies aimed at expanding students’ intellectual interests, improving critical thinking and communication skills, and creating a community of learners. Seminars are

taught in small sections emphasizing discussion, critical interpretation of important texts, multidisciplinary perspectives, exploration of diverse contrasting perspectives and interpretations, and examination of arguments and evidence.

- *Writing (W)* – Students with an ACT English score of 27 or higher or an SAT Critical Reading score of 640 or higher are exempt from the College Writing requirement.
- *Quantitative Reasoning (Q)* – Q courses enable students to develop those skills that lead to an understanding of quantitatively-based problems related to contemporary society. All students must meet this requirement, either in a foundational course (e.g., calculus or statistics) or in a terminal course (e.g., Mathematics for the Liberal Arts).
- *Diversity (D)* – Diversity courses address the study of identities (e.g. race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.), societies, nations, or national languages and cultures to prepare students to function in the global community.
- *Contemporary Issues in Science (CS)* – CS courses, which are focused on natural science or technology, examine the ways in which science contributes to the study of significant problems in the contemporary world, and are designed to help students make informed decisions about these issues.

Ways of Knowing

Students complete one course—Inquiry (I) or Research & Creative Experience (R)—in each of the four Ways of Knowing: Arts (IA or RA), Humanities (IH or RH), Social Science (IS or RS), and Natural Science (IN or RN).

- Inquiry courses, which are normally larger than Research & Creative Experience courses, provide students with an understanding of the methods used to discover and create the factual and theoretical knowledge of the discipline. Each course examines particular issues in the discipline while exploring its methodological and theoretical foundations. Many students only take Inquiry courses in satisfying the four Ways of Knowing categories.
- Research & Creative Experience courses build on the competencies students have developed in the foundation courses. These experiences are not limited to a student’s major field of study and can incorporate a range of authentic experiences from traditional one-on-one mentoring to group Research and Creative Experience courses. Courses intended for majors only do not carry a specific Ways of Knowing designation (e.g, MUS 490 R).

Permitted Substitutions

- There is a list of courses, normally taken by science majors, that students can use to substitute for the CS and IN requirements (see MSU catalog for details). A student must complete 2 courses from this list to make this substitution.
- The University Honors course UH 202 may substitute for the Inquiry Humanities (IH) requirement.

University Core Policies

- To receive Core designation for an MSU course, the course must have the Core designation the term the course is/was taken.
- No University Core course may be taken on a pass/fail basis.
- Most Advanced Placement (AP) courses for which students have received a 3 or better on the national exam may be applied to the Core.
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP) courses may not be applied to the Core.

Advising and Developing a Program of Study

Pre-College Credits and Placement

- Advanced Placement (AP) credit (but no grade) is awarded to students who took AP coursework in high school and received a score of 3, 4, or 5 on the AP test in that subject area. AP credit does fulfill core requirements. AP credit awarded to students is listed on their university on-line transcripts after it is received and processed by MSU.
- International Baccalaureate (IB) credits are accepted as college credits and many count toward core. Details are found at <http://www.montana.edu/admissions/ib.shtml>.
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP) credit is awarded for successful performance in certain Subject Examinations. For more information refer to the Academic Information section of the MSU Bulletin or contact the Testing Service, Room 243 Reid Hall, 994-6984. CLEP credit does not fulfill core requirements.
- Advanced Standing by Challenge: Students who have completed the work of a college course on their own initiative and time may, with the approval of their academic advisors, instructors, department head and college dean, take a comprehensive examination in the subject matter of the course. A grade will be awarded based on the student's performance. Official permission forms for this process are available at the Registrar's Office and details are outlined in the Academic Information section of the MSU Bulletin.
- MSU has mandatory placement in Math, College Writing, and Spanish language courses.
 - English: Students are exempt from ENGL121W if they received a 27 ACT or 640 SAT score on the English portion of those tests. Students with these scores have satisfied the W core requirement, but do not receive university credit. Students with low scores on standardized tests (including the Montana Writing Assessment) are required to take ENGL 118 or ENGL 119 to prepare for ENGL 121W. Students are notified directly.
 - Math: Students are placed in appropriate courses based on ACT or SAT Math scores, CLEP credit, or the locally implemented Math Placement Exam (MPLEX). A detailed flow chart indicating the placement procedure is found at http://www.math.montana.edu/undergrad/prereq_flow.html. The MPLEX is available to students during freshman orientation.
 - Spanish: Students with any previous Spanish language instruction must either provide evidence of prior credits or take a proficiency test (CLEP or local test, available at orientation). The results are used to place students in appropriate courses. The introductory (MLS 101) course is intended only for those with no prior experience. Details of this process are at <http://www.montana.edu/wwwml/placement.html>.

Transfer Students

Transfer students often present an advising challenge because of their varied backgrounds and access to information about how their previous coursework will specifically transfer into MSU. Transfer students who have been accepted at MSU are eligible to register for classes immediately following the advising/registration period for continuing students; for example, transfer students accepted for enrollment Spring Semester may meet with an advisor and register for spring classes as soon as the continuing students' registration period has ended in November.

Transfer students have two options for advising and registration during the summer. They can make an appointment with an advisor in the curriculum of their choice at any time throughout the summer or attend the transfer orientation session immediately preceding Fall Semester.

The official transcripts of all students transferring into MSU are evaluated by the Office of Admissions and a "Transfer Equivalency Worksheet" is generated which lists the courses/credit hours/grades from the previous institution and the corresponding equivalent credits awarded and course equivalency (if there is an equivalent course) at MSU. This form indicates if credit has been accepted toward core credit (indicated by the letter designations for each area, ie: H = Humanities) or toward elective credit. If a course at another institution is recognized as the equivalent of a specific course at MSU, the specific MSU course number and title is listed. Take note of the grade a student received in a previous course; if a grade of "F" is listed, the course and MSU equivalent will still be listed, but of course, no credit is awarded.

When the "Transfer Equivalency Worksheet" has been completed, the student AND the department receive a copy. Due to workloads in the Admissions Office, these worksheets may not be completed until several weeks after a student has been accepted; therefore it is common for a student to be cleared for registration and meet with an advisor before MSU has officially evaluated the student's previous transcript. If this happens, here are some suggestions:

- Ask the student to bring an unofficial copy of their previous transcript so you can at least see what courses have been taken and infer appropriate coursework at MSU.
- Call the Transcript Evaluation Clerks in Admissions, Hamilton Hall at 994-6617 for information on the student's transcript or to get a copy of it faxed to your office.
- Encourage students to contact you after they receive the equivalency worksheet if they have questions or concerns about the classes they registered for.

Credit Information

- 12 credits required for full-time student status
- 12 credits minimum for Financial Aid, Athletics, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Residence Halls; 6 credits maximum per semester for Montana Residency requirements; 7 credits maximum for students admitted on part-time probationary status
- 12 credits and up is the same tuition fee
- Average number of credits for a semester = 12-16
- 24 credits minimum needed per year for intercollegiate athletics eligibility (and satisfactory progress). Credit for zero level courses (Math 085, ENGL 001, 005) may only be counted toward the 12 credits of eligibility each semester during the first year of attendance.

Advising Resources for Advisors and Students

Advising Information by College

College of Agriculture

- Advising web page: <http://www.ag.montana.edu/students/advising.htm>

College of Arts and Architecture

- Contact individual departments

College of Business

- Student Services Office: Reid 338 - Ph: 4681 - Christine Lamb, Assistant Dean

College of Education, Health and Human Development

- Department of Education: Education Advising Center: Reid 132 - Ph: 1880
- Department of Health & Human Development: HHD Advising Center - Hosaeus PE Complex - Ph: 4001 - hhdadvising@montana.edu

College of Engineering

- Contact individual departments

College of Letters & Science

- Contact individual departments

College of Nursing

- Advising Office: Sherrick 109 - Ph: 3783 - Patricia Hanson, Advising Coordinator

Liberal Studies Degree

- Reid 418 (University Studies Office) - David Cherry, Director - Ph: 3561 - liberalstudies@montana.edu

University Studies Program / Academic Advising Center

- Academic Advising: Reid 418 - Ph: 3532 - Philip Gaines, Director - Diane Donnelly, Associate Director for Advising - Nora Smith, Associate Director for Curriculum and Instruction

College of Technology In Bozeman: A Division of MSU-Great Falls

- Culbertson Hall 201 - Ph: 5536
- A satellite campus of the Great Fall College of Technology was established on the MSU-Bozeman campus in the Fall of 2005 to offer preparatory courses in Math and English, as well as provide 2-year programs of interest to Gallatin Valley residents. The COT offers academic support services such as free tutoring for all of their classes. Courses taught by the COT in Bozeman are included in the MSU-Bozeman on-line Schedule of Classes, and registration for these courses is seamless for MSU students. Detailed information can be found at <http://bozeman.msugf.edu>.

Other Campus Resources

ASMSU Tutoring - Available for all students. \$3.50/hour first 5 hours; then \$7.00/hour. Contact ASMSU Office - SUB 281 / 994-2933

Athletics Academic Coordinator - Provides academic support, monitors successful academic progress, and verifies NCAA academic requirements for all athletes. Fieldhouse 133A / 994-4330

Career Services - Encourage students to familiarize themselves with this office for career planning and the career resource library. Interest inventories and computerized career planning are available. SUB 135 / 994-4353 / www.montana.edu/careers/

Dean of Students Office - Act as advocates for students. Assist faculty in dealing with issues of academic misconduct. SUB120 / 994-2826

Directed Interdisciplinary Studies - Degree program designed for undergraduates interested in pursuing an area of scholarly/creative inquiry that falls outside the established departmental structure at MSU. Contact the Honors Program for information. QUAD 106D / 994-4110

Disability, Re-entry and Veteran Services - Personalized and specialized academic support services including assistance for non-traditional-age students, eligibility and accommodations for students with physical or learning disabilities, as well as services for veterans, dependents and members of selected reserves. SUB 155 / 994-2824

Financial Aid Services - Refer students to Financial Aid Services for deadlines, questions, course-credit requirements, work-study, student employment, etc. SUB 135 / 994-2845 / <http://www.montana.edu/wwwfa/>

First Year Initiative (FYI) and Office of Retention - Mentoring Program and FYI Workshops. Dean of Students Office, SUB 120 / 994-7359

Foreign Student Advising - Office of International Programs, Culbertson 408 / 994-7751

Health Professions Advising - Information for undergraduate students interested in careers in medicine, dentistry, optometry, or any of the allied health professions. Offers assistance in the exploration of health professions careers, course requirements, MCAT review, health-related experience opportunities, student organizations, and preparation of professional school applications. Contact Jane Cary / Leon Johnson 308 / 994-1670

Math TAC Learning Center - Tutors available to help students with Tutorial Assisted Courses (TAC) - MATH 085 & 103. Wilson 1-110 / 994-5375

Modern Languages Department - Spanish course placement. Reid Hall 329 / 994-6199

National Student Exchange - Coordinates student exchanges for both incoming and outgoing students with over 170 colleges in the United States and its territories. Contact University Studies Office / Reid 418 / 994-3532.

Native American Advising Office - Provides academic support and monitors successful academic progress. American Indian Club Room. Wilson Room 1 / 994-4880

Office for Community Involvement - Services include: Acts as a liaison between faculty, students

and community agencies; provides service learning resources to students and faculty; and conducts faculty workshops on integrating community involvement into University courses. Culbertson 330 / 994-6902 / www.montana.edu/comminv.

Office of International Programs - Coordinates international exchanges and study abroad opportunities for students and faculty. Also provides information and advising for faculty members who want to apply for Fulbright awards and offers grants for faculty members to undertake international activities through their International Faculty Research and Program Development Fund. In addition, OIP offers information and advising to international scholars at MSU and to departments on issues relating to immigration regulations and procedures for hiring individuals who are citizens of other nations. Culbertson 400 / 994-4031 / www.montana.edu/international

Testing Service - CLEP (College level examination program). CLEP exams are given by scheduled appointment, for a fee. CLEP credits may NOT be applied toward CORE 2.0. P/F. Reid 243 / 994-6984

TRiO Student Support Services - Federally funded program; eligibility criteria includes 1st generation college student, disabled students, and financial need. Offers assistance in developmental Math and English, tutoring, study skills, and counseling. SUB 146 / 994-4541 / www.montana.edu/trioss

TRiO Workshops - Workshops offered free of charge each semester to all interested students on topics such as Time Management, Test Anxiety, Test Taking, Note Taking, Reading Textbooks, etc. Contact TRiO for specific dates and times. SUB 146 / 994-4541.

Undergraduate Scholars Program - Opportunities and funding for undergraduate students to engage in hands-on research and creative activities under guidance of faculty mentor and formally present their findings. Reid 418 / 994-3651 / www.montana.edu/usp/

University Honors Program - QUADD, Room 106D / 994-4110

University Studies Program - Information on advising questions, core curriculum, etc. Coordinates US 101 First Year Seminar. Reid 418 / 994-3532

Writing Center - Available to all students who desire help and guidance in writing papers, reports, etc. Appointments necessary. Wilson 1-108 / 994-5315

General Academic Advising Resources

National Academic Advising Association: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/>

This site features a wide range of information applicable to academic advising, as well as links to numerous additional sites.

Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook by Virginia Gordon, Wesley Habley & Associates, 2000, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. (Available in the MSU-Bozeman Library)

*This section was prepared by Pat Lane and Diane Donnelly, University Studies Program / Academic Advising Center, MSU.

Advising Graduate Students

The Division of Graduate
Education is in
Montana Hall 108
994-4145

The mission of the Division of Graduate Education (DGE) is to develop, nurture and sustain high quality programs of post-baccalaureate study, set and maintain standards for graduate courses and programs, develop the resources to recruit and support quality graduate students, and guide Montana State University's graduate program into the twenty-first century.

All faculty working with graduate students need to be familiar with the DGE policies and procedures. While it is ultimately the students' responsibility to follow these policies, we often see students who misunderstand them after receiving incomplete or incorrect information from their advisors. To avoid this situation, consult the online DGE catalog (www.montana.edu/gradstudies) or contact the DGE staff whenever you are unsure of a specific policy. Also, encourage your students to carefully review the DGE catalog at the start of their programs. Inevitably, it takes far more time, effort and resources to address issues after mistakes have been made.

Common Issues That Cause Problems:

1. How do students establish in-state residency?

This issue is of particular concern for primary investigators who support graduate students since resident students naturally require fewer funds for tuition assistance than do non-resident students. In-state admission and fee status is granted to persons who demonstrate that their permanent residence is Montana and that they have paid appropriate taxes over a period of time. To qualify, students must meet six basic requirements, which can be found at http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies/cat_res&fees.shtml. Students initially classified as out-of-state or non-residents must live and pay taxes in Montana for one year, while taking no more than six credits a semester, to successfully petition for residency. Students that come to Montana based on a verifiable offer of full-time employment may be eligible for residency in less than the standard one-year minimum.

2. Can students transfer courses taken at another university to MSU?

Yes. The number of semester hours transferred from other institutions (non-degree or degree status) combined with credit(s) taken as a non-degree graduate at MSU may not exceed nine (9) credit hours on a Program of Study. Individual departments may have stricter standards on the number of credits to be transferred. There are a number of conditions on the credits that can be transferred, which can be reviewed at http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies/cat_trans_credits.shtml.

3. Before taking a semester off, what do students need to do?

MSU has a continuous enrollment policy. The full details can be reviewed at http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies/cat_continuous_enrollment.shtml. Students wishing to take time away from their programs should inform their advisors and departments of their plans. Students must understand that the six and ten year limits for the completing Master's and Doctoral degrees are calculated from the start of their programs. Time away from a program is not considered a valid reason for extending deadlines. When students wish to return, they will need to submit an "Intent to Register" form to the Registrar's Office.

4. When do students need to submit a Graduate Program of Study and Committee Form?

This important planning tool must be submitted to the DGE by the end of the second term of study for master's students and by the third term for doctoral students. Failure to do so will result in the student being placed on academic probation for failing to make satisfactory progress toward a degree.

5. How can students change their programs of study?

A student must submit the changes on a "Change of Program" form with the signatures of the advisor and department head. Completed courses may not be removed and students must repeat any course in a program where a grade below a C- was earned. More information can be found at <http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies>.

6. How can students change their graduate committees?

Students must submit a "Graduate Committee Revision" form with the changes, reasons, and signatures of the faculty being added or removed.

7. What are the formatting requirements for theses and dissertations?

The requirements for formatting theses and dissertations are found in the "Style and Composition Guide Guide" on the DGE Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Website at <http://www.montana.edu/etd/>. These guidelines supercede all departmental and discipline standards and must be followed if students wish to have their work accepted by the DGE. Although it is the students' responsibility to see that their theses or dissertations conform to DGE requirements, advisors should ensure that students do not submit work with significant formatting errors. Please be aware of the specific deadlines for submitting a thesis or dissertation each semester.

8. How do students set up their comprehensive exams or defenses?

After an advisor agrees that a student is ready, the student needs to schedule a comprehensive exam or defense so ALL members can be present. The time and location of the public presentation portion of a thesis or dissertation defense should be announced within the department at least two weeks in advance. The DGE asks that doctoral students submit this information to DGE for inclusion on the "What's New" section of its web-site. Students must be registered for at least three credits for these events to take place and must meet comprehensive examination deadlines each semester.

9. Can students change their committees if they have trouble scheduling their comprehensive exams or defenses to include all members?

The DGE frowns on any practice where expediency outweighs the quality of graduate education. The committee that advises a student from the beginning of his/her graduate career and was presumably selected based on their ability to support the student's program should be the same committee that examines the student. Students should schedule all committee meetings as far in advance as is practical to coordinate all members' schedules in time to satisfy all deadlines.

10. How does a student arrange to graduate?

Again, students need the agreement of their advisors. Then, assuming that students will complete ALL degree requirements by semester deadlines and are registered for a least three credits, they

can file an "Application for Advanced Degree" with the DGE by September 20 for Fall Semester, February 5 for Spring Semester and June 10 for Summer Semester. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in a student having to register for three credits the following semester in order to graduate.

Common Advising Errors:

1. Not clarifying the difference to masters students between "A" and "B" Plans.

Master's programs in many fields may be taken under either of two plans. Plan "A" requires a thesis and is recommended for the students whose goals make early research experience desirable. Plan "B" requires a professional paper or project and is designed to serve those taking course work en route to a doctoral program who wish to defer original research until they formally begin their doctoral programs or those in terminal degree programs where original research is not necessary.

2. Not knowing what is required or what can be included in a program of study.

The Program of Study is intended to allow graduate students to individualize their route to an advanced degree. However, there are numerous requirements and limitations that individual departments and the DGE have set to ensure that all degrees represent a minimum level of academic achievement. Once approved, this document becomes a contract with the DGE that defines the work students must complete before receiving a degree. Programs may be revised and updated to reflect the availability of classes and shifts in academic foci.

3. Not knowing the requirements of a graduate committee.

For master's students, three to five committee members are needed. The majority of members must be MSU faculty from the major department. Adjunct faculty, faculty affiliates, faculty of other institutions, and non-academic experts may serve as members but may not chair a committee. Off campus and non-faculty appointees must submit a curriculum vitae to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education for approval.

For doctoral students, departments have the choice of appointing either four or five committee members. Three or four members must be within a student's major and at least one, but not more than two, must represent the student's supporting area or minor (if applicable). The Vice Provost for Graduate Education appoints a Graduate Representative to all doctoral committees. Adjunct faculty, faculty affiliates, faculty of other institutions, and non-academic experts may serve as members but not as a committee chairs. Off campus and non-faculty appointees must submit a curriculum vitae to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education for approval.

4. Signing an Application for Advanced Degree "too early".

"Applications for Advanced Degree," like any form requiring your signature, should never be signed automatically. You first need to be sure or have a strong expectation that a student will complete ALL degree requirements by the deadlines applicable to the term he/she wishes to graduate.

6. Telling undergraduate students that they can enroll in your graduate course without understanding the petition process these students must go through.

Graduate courses are designed for graduate students. Exceptional undergraduate seniors may enroll in graduate courses pending the approval of a petition by the DGE. This process ensures that the quality of graduate courses is not compromised by the presence of inadequately prepared students. The petition form can be downloaded at <http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies/forms.shtml>.

American Indian Students*

One American Indian student described his reactions when he first came to Montana State University. He was in a speech communication class, and the teacher's instructions for the students' first speech were "be sure to make eye contact and project your voice loudly to be heard throughout the room." This young man became anxious. He had been taught that making eye contact or looking directly at others was combative and confrontational. He had heard elders speak in soft, even tones, and he had learned that to speak loudly is to speak boastfully. Furthermore, the other students seemed to be rewarded for rude behavior. The best students seemed to want the spotlight and relish confrontations with professors and the other students.

To be effective with American Indian students, you must be attuned to their different learning styles and cultural backgrounds. Recently a group of MSU Indian students in the American Indian Research Opportunities program participated in a discussion about their experiences at MSU. They offer several suggestions for those teaching Native American students.

Suggestions for Teaching American Indian Students

"Don't stereotype us."

Indian students at Montana State University may come from one of seven different reservations in Montana, or they may be from an urban setting such as Billings. Or they could be members of an out-of-state tribe. Each tribe has its own beliefs, codes of behavior, and values. Moreover, some Indian students have been taught to follow their traditional cultures while others have adopted the values of the dominant culture. Some Indian students are well-prepared, while others face challenges adapting to the college environment. No generalization applies to all Indian students.

"I can't speak on behalf of all Indians."

Teachers sometimes place unwarranted stress on Indian students in classes where the content relates to American Indians. They call on the Indian students to give the Native American perspective. This demand can make the students feel uncomfortable because they know that there is a wide variety of viewpoints among Native Americans; no individual can be an expert on every aspect of Indian culture. You should not assume that all Indian students are well acquainted with their own heritage. However, Indian students can be valuable resources. An appropriate strategy is to speak with them before hand to see if they have knowledge on a topic and if they feel comfortable speaking about it.

"We're not angry about the past; we are upset about today's racism."

Indian students, especially those from reservations, have boldly stepped into the very different world of the university, but they are sensitive to racism whether it is intentional or unintentional.

"We are family-oriented."

Strong connections to extended family, a strength back home, may impose hardships on students attending school. They may be expected to go home for funerals even for relatives who you may consider distant. Indian students who come from reservations are far from their homes, families, and support systems. They may feel that they are living in an alien culture, which may contribute to their being lonely and depressed.

"If we're quiet, that doesn't mean we are not paying attention."

This conduct may arise from a variety of sources including the desire not to show themselves as being better than other Indian students or not to appear to act "white." Many Indian students prefer to blend in rather than stand out.

"Our thought processes may be different."

Studies of American Indian cognition (cited in Wright 59) indicate that there "may be important differences in perceptions of the world, of time, of the emotional content of nonverbal vocalizations, and of the meaning of teachers' behavior between American Indians and Anglos."

"English may not be our first language."

A few students may speak English as a second language, so they may be reticent about speaking up in class or may need to use tutoring services such as the Writing Center.

"We don't want special treatment; we just want a fair chance."

You should make yourself available to assist American Indian students who need help, but you should not assume that because a student is Indian, his or her academic preparation is weak.

What strategies can teachers employ to provide a great learning experience for their students?

The following suggestions are culled from research into teaching American Indians and other minorities. Many of these strategies also apply to non-Indian students. In fact, non-Indian rural students share some of the culture shock that Indian students may experience when they arrive at MSU. Also, they may not apply to every Indian student. So the best advice is to remain flexible and use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities.

- Practice personal warmth plus high expectations.
- Respect cultural differences.
- Learn the cultural resources of your students.
- Develop multiple instructional approaches.
- Be aware of the ways you ask questions.
- Remember some students do not like to be "spotlighted" in front of a group.
- Be aware of proximity preferences – how close is comfortable?

MSU Programs for American Indian Students**TRiO Support Services**

The goal of TRiO is to increase the retention and graduation rates of eligible participants, defined as first generation, low income, and /or physically disabled. The program provides counseling, small group tutorials, basic skills course work, and study skills instruction.

146 SUB, 994-4541

Affirmative Action Office

Montana State University is working to institute specific programs designed to enhance the human potential of faculty and staff, thereby increasing opportunities for career advancement on campus. The Affirmative Action Office is responsible for ensuring a nondiscriminatory setting for all MSU employees and students and monitoring MSU's compliance with all state and federal laws.

Suite 7, Hamilton Hall, 994-2042

American Indian Research Opportunities

AIRO is the umbrella organization for minority programs. Those available to MSU students are the Initiative for Minority Student Development (IMSD) and the Leadership Alliance.

312 Roberts Hall, 994-5847

American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)

A nationally recognized organization, the MSU chapter provides support for science and engineering students and assists with recruitment of high school students to MSU programs.

Center for Bilingual/ Multicultural Education

The Center's objective is to promote the philosophy of bilingual/multicultural education on the MSU campus and support activities that promote multicultural understanding among the culturally and linguistically different populations in the northwest region.

140 Reid Hall, 994-1930

Native American Studies Department

The department offers academic opportunities to students wishing to minor in Native American Studies or those wishing to take core courses focusing on Native American issues. Students may also earn a Master of Arts in Native American Studies. The department also maintains a full-time advisor and works cooperatively with the American Indian Club to meet the needs of Indian students.

2-179 Wilson Hall, 994-3881

Indians in Montana

The seven reservations in Montana:

- Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation (Chippewa and Cree)
- Blackfeet Indian Reservation (Blackfeet)
- Flathead Indian Reservation (Salish and Kootenai)
- Fort Peck Indian Reservation (Assiniboine and Sioux)
- Fort Belknap Indian reservation (Gros Ventre and Assiniboine)
- Crow Indian Reservation (Crow)
- Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation (Northern Cheyenne)

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Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. *The Indian in the Classroom: Readings for the Teacher with Indian Students*. Helena: Montana Department of Education.

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*This section was prepared by John G. Watts (AIRO Director, MSU)