Collaborations for Student Success

Information to help First Year Students and Parents

SUNY Potsdam
Student Success Center
Academic Advising & Support Office
Sisson Hall 110
(315) 267-2702

FAQ’s
About Registration and Advising

Q. When is advising and registration for the Spring semesters?
   A. Advising begins around mid-October and registration starts about three weeks later (for the following spring semester).

Q. When is advising and registration for the Fall semesters?
   A. Advising begins around the end of March with registration starting about three weeks later (for the following fall semester).

Q. What do I need to do prior to registering?
   A. All students are required to meet with their assigned advisor before registering. Students should come prepared for the advising appointment by accessing the BearPAWS “Class Schedule by Department” page to see what classes are available for the next semester. Also a student should bring the college catalog and the general education audit sheet that needs to be updated each semester for the student’s own records.

Q. Where can I get additional academic advising assistance?
   A. Tim Morse, in Sisson Hall 102, and Kristin Jordan, in Sisson Hall 105, are available to assist students. They can answer advising questions, do unofficial audits on coursework completed and determine what needs to be completed to graduate.
Important Policies & Procedures:

1. Dropping and Adding Classes

- Students need to know that once classes start, the Drop/Add period is only the first 5 days of classes. They can make schedule changes during this first week of classes without penalty. Students considering schedule changes are always encouraged to consult with their academic advisors first because changes can have unforeseen consequences.
- Students will need the permission of the instructor coordinating the particular First Year Interest Group (FIG) to drop a course in a FIG.
- Students will need permission to drop a First Year Experience class that is connected to a residence hall, because it may involve moving the student to another residence hall. The contact person will be Amanda Grazioso who will be available during the Orientation advising sessions.

2. Declaring a Major

- Crane students are already declared by Crane. They must pass an audition & be specially admitted into Crane.
- The Early Childhood & Childhood Education majors (a first major) and the Middle/Secondary Education majors (a second major) will need to declare their majors online after completing the tutorial for teacher education majors. During orientation, this will be done with the help of the Orientation Leaders. For further information, see Lisa Stewart in Satterlee Hall 110.
- New freshmen Arts & Sciences students may also declare a major at Summer Orientation, if they wish to do so. There will be a table set up so that students can fill out the major declaration form after they are registered for classes. Not all freshmen will want to declare a major, and they can remain undeclared if they are not sure of their major at this time. It is perfectly acceptable NOT to declare a major as a freshman, and a student should not feel pressured to do this. A liberal arts education means a student can explore many different disciplines through the General Education program requirements. Note: Because of the course sequences in some majors, a student declaring later may require additional time toward his/her degree.
- Community Health majors must write an essay to be evaluated for writing skills before they can declare.
3. Fall Advisor Assignments

- Students will probably not have the same advisor in the fall that they have for summer Orientation.
- New undeclared (exploring) freshmen will receive their advisor assignments by email in the first couple of weeks of the fall semester.
- New freshmen (or New Transfer Students) who declare a major will have a temporary advisor assigned after Orientation (or after their appointment). Generally, this is the Department Chair. They must check in with the Chair of the appropriate department during the second week of school for curriculum review and possible advisor reassignment. The chair may wish to reassign the student to a different permanent advisor after discussing the major curriculum and career interests of the student.

Academic Support Lab
SUNY Potsdam’s Academic Support Lab (Sisson 106), part of the Student Success Center (SSC), provides students with access to resources and support services to improve their academic performance.

- **Group Tutoring:** Trained peer tutors provide content and study skills assistance in over 90 courses. Tutoring is typically provided in small groups, and sessions are scheduled at the mutual convenience of students and their tutors.
- **Workshops and Training:** In addition to small group tutoring sessions, the Academic Support Lab also hosts workshops for students as well as training and in-service programs for SSC tutors.
- **Skills Assistance:** Staff is available to assist students in improving Time Management, Test Taking, Note Taking, and/or Study Skills.
- **Computer Lab:** There are six computers and a printer available in the lab. We also have laptops available for loan.

Contact: **Timothy Morse**
102 Sisson Hall, (315) 267-2702

Accommodative Services
If you are a student with a disability requesting reasonable academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids, you should make the specific request to Accommodative Services. Submit (written) documentation of your disability and the need for accommodations. The Director can assist you in this process.

Contact: **Sharon House**
111 Sisson Hall, (315) 267-2702
Mission Statement

The mission of academic advising at SUNY Potsdam is to foster dynamic and interactive relationships between advisors and advisees that help students to:

Successfully negotiate the academic requirements of the college;

Take advantage of the opportunities offered at the college, both inside and outside the classroom; and,

Develop the skills necessary to cope with, thrive in and provide leadership in our complex, ambiguous and mutable world.

Philosophy

Academic advising at SUNY Potsdam is a vitally important responsibility, which directly affects our students’ academic success. Advising, our most important responsibility after teaching is more than assistance in selecting courses for the upcoming semester. It involves a relationship between the student and advisor, built through a series of face-to-face meetings, focused on utilizing our campus’ resources to help students formulate sound educational, career and life goals. The relationship provides students with a direct link to a faculty or professional staff member, enabling them to actively participate in the process of degree attainment and increase their overall connection to the College and its mission and goals. A comprehensive advising process helps students pursue their educational goals as developing adults enabling them to become successful members of the Potsdam College Community. This success increases student retention providing a more stable educational and social environment for everyone.

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