

Clark First Year Intensives

Teaching and Advising

Introduction

As you embark on what I believe is your first FYI teaching experience, you might find the [First Year Intensives & Pre-major Advising: Lessons from Year One](#) Presentation to be of use. They are from 2011, but the guidance is still relevant. They don't relate to course content, and I know you've already determined that. Rather, they focus on understanding our new students and reaching them effectively – so they are about pedagogy. I think you'll find them helpful as you prepare to meet the incoming group of 18 year olds, and worth referring to again as the semester unfolds.

The slides address three overarching topics:

- 1) why FYIs and their connections to LEEP (much of this already known to you);
- 2) what works and doesn't, according to faculty;
- 3) academic advising overview

The slides were designed to be a stand-alone FYI training module, so you will see that they contain tons of information. Still I am happy to explain more in person – just let me know. I suggest that you read them online, so that the URLs work. I believe that I have sent you the referenced attachments already, but if you'd like them again, please let me know.

The pre-major advising aspect of your job likely requires the most new information. To introduce you to that, Kevin McKenna will offer several New Adviser Workshops this fall. Look for an email.

We will gather new and experienced FYI faculty periodically during the semester, and I plan bi-weekly emails. We also will have a list serve so that you can query your peers and benefit from the wisdom of the crowd.

We are now in the fourth year of our FYI program, and have worked most of the kinks out. Of course, there is still room for improvement in both the model and our communication. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Mary-Ellen Boyle, PhD

Associate Provost and Dean of the College

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The New LEEP Center Advising Model

Because LEEP was featured in admissions materials and visits to campus, this class arrives with high (and perhaps nebulous) expectations about LEEP. Given this, during the next week or so we will be making presentations to student leaders (PAs, RAs, mentors) as well as to the new students and families, explaining LEEP, the LEEP Center, and LEEP Center Advising. As FYI instructors you will play a key role in students' further understanding of these ideas, as well as in their successful transition to Clark.

The following describes how the LEEP Center Advising will work, and explain your role. The [Faculty Guide to LEEP Center Advising](#) goes into a great deal of detail, so consider this email the SparkNotes version:

1. In response to the question perhaps topmost in your mind, **“How will my role as faculty adviser be affected by LEEP Center Advising?”** the short answer is, “Very little.” We have thought a great deal about this, and it was this question that prompted creation of the Guide. Fundamentally, and explained further on page 3:
 - a. *The core responsibilities of the academic advisers do not change.*
 - b. *What's new is that the academic advisers – and the student – have an added support structure.*
 - c. *The two types of advising might work together in a range of ways, depending upon the student's needs and the faculty adviser's knowledge.*
2. **LEEP Center advisers have been assigned to students by FYI**, listed in the [LEEP Center Adviser](#) Assignments document. The [Guide](#) has suggestions about how you might work together (especially pages 3-4).
3. New students will meet their LEEP Center advisers at a dinner next **Saturday August 24th** at 6 on the campus green. Faculty are invited to this dinner as you have been in the past, though there is no expectation that you will attend. You should have already introduced yourself to your students by email, and will meet them when classes begin. The next contact between LEEP Center advisers and your FYI students will be an all-class meeting, later in September. See the Guide for an outline of fall and spring plans.
4. In the process of developing the LEEP Center Advising model, we came to see clearly the contours of the existing advising support network at Clark. It's amazingly rich and nuanced. See page 5 for a detailed description. We will be sending new students and their families a letter explaining the breadth and depth of this advising and support, and will be sure you get a copy.
5. Finally, a bit more about the [Guide](#). Our initial intent, at the recommendation of the LEEP Center Advising Subcommittee (formed last spring under the aegis of UAB), was to offer faculty a rationale for the new model. The subcommittee is still reviewing that rationale, hence the DRAFT watermark. As the draft emerged, however, we realized that the devil was in the details, so the rationale is accompanied by an overview of operational details for LEEP Center Advising. This should help you understand not only *why* but also *who*, *what*, *when* and *where*. Clearly, we will continue to develop the model as the years unfold, and are committed to careful evaluation and continuous improvement. We will be querying you periodically, and appreciate your input at any point.

First Year Hybrids Advising

As you may or may not realize, your FYI course/lab is what we refer to as a “hybrid” – it will include first year students as well as upper class students, and in several cases, grad students. I am writing now with a few requests about communicating with your advisees, and several suggestions.

First, please make sure that your first year students know that this is their FYI ; that you are their pre-major adviser; that it is different from many of their friends' since it has upper class students but still counts as their FYI.

Second, you might explain the “hybrid” model and its educational rationale. Though it goes against the dominant FYI model, several faculty have asserted that this is a superior way to help new students transition to Clark, since the older students provide role models and they get the extra attention of the faculty adviser, who has fewer advisees. It obviously also solves resource problems, inevitable at a small school like Clark. This year we have five hybrid courses and three hybrid labs – you can see who you are by the others I've emailed here. We aren't sure how to determine if this is better or worse than a “pure” FYI but I suspect that it all comes down to how the professor handles it (hence this email to you!)

Third, don't hesitate to treat the FY students differently from the others. You can definitely work with them separately on advising issues, and you might consider a lunch or off-campus event just for them, with financial support from my office as outlined previously. Some faculty worry about treating the FY students differently, and depriving other students the special attention. Please be reassured that the point of the FYIs is to be different from other courses, and the incoming students will expect to have a different relationship with you than the others do.

Finally, it's a good idea to devise separate assignments and/or grading criteria. But I am sure you already thought of that... if you haven't, you might consider connecting with other hybrid instructors for ideas. I am happy to help too.

Locating your Advising List

- For those of you new to advising, here's what you need to know from a technical standpoint.
 - Advisee names are listed on your [CUWeb](#) faculty advising page, where you can find their course schedules and other identifying information.
 - You also have access to their "Blue Folder" which contains a variety of information, including their academic areas of interest.
- If you are an experienced pre-major adviser, you will note changes to the Blue Folders, particularly a "notes" section. You can also generate different email lists for different types of advisees, and have easy access to various course grid filters for scheduling questions. Changes are described on the, [blue folder log-in](#) page (or accessed through ClarkYOU for those who use that channel).

FYI Course Support Funds

Of the many goals we have for the FYI courses, an important one is to help students transition to their new community. One way to do this is to share an academically-oriented activity outside of the classroom, or to augment in-class time with a speaker or a meal. As in the past, the Dean of the College (DOC) office has a modest budget to support such course related needs. These funds may be used, for example, to pay for museum entrance or conference, offer an honorarium to a guest lecturer, buy donuts or pizza for a mid-semester advising meeting, support a PLA, or pay for transportation when the leased vans don't work for you.

Procedures for requesting funds from the DOC have changed. Rather than sending an email to me as in the past, we ask that you complete the [Course Support Funding Request](#) and send it to Kim Fisher (klfisher@clarku.edu). Requests will be processed on a rolling basis, and we will make every effort to allocate funds fairly across all 38 FYIs and 612 students. Don't hesitate to also use departments funds as they are available.

FYI Transportation Information

Many of you are planning to take your FYI students off campus during the semester ahead. As in the past, the Dean of the College office can support these trips, assuming careful planning and consideration of our resource constraints. **Academic Affairs will be leasing two 12-passenger vans from September 1st – November 26th which should accommodate nearly all trips.** The vans won't work in every circumstance, so we have investigated other options. Here's how to proceed:

1. In order to determine the best option for your trip, review the [Transportation Options and Procedures](#) document (attached). The matrix on page 1 should be particularly helpful.
2. If you determine you can use one of the leased vans, consult the [Van Guidelines](#) (attached). Please read guidelines carefully as there are changes from last year, and planning ahead will be necessary. The vans can be reserved online through Clark's Event Management System (EMS) <http://schedule.clarku.edu/>. When you receive your van reservation confirmation you will be asked to provide the driver's name, phone number, and confirmation that the driver license check and the driver training are both completed. You do not need to know who the driver is when you reserve the van, but a confirmed certified driver will need to be stated two days prior to your trip. It's all explained in the *Guidelines*.
3. If the Academic Affairs vans are scheduled during the time that you need them, a few additional vans may be available from the Athletics Department and/or the Outing Club. Details and contact information are in the *Transportation Options and Procedures* document.
4. If you are not able to use the leased vans and/or anticipate other travel costs, **procedures for requesting funds from the DOC** have changed. Rather than sending an email to the dean we ask that you complete the *Course Support Funding Request* (attached) and send it to Kim Fisher (kfisher@clarku.edu).
5. Note that while FYI courses are given priority, that this email will be sent to all faculty shortly.