

## Planning for the Spring Semester

As we approach the middle of the semester, your student has completed a fair amount of work for her/his courses, and developed a sense of where she/he stands academically at this point. The Fall Break hopefully provided them with some rest after midterms or some time to prepare for major mid-semester papers or exams.

Students have a good sense of how the semester is progressing at this point, so it is an ideal time for you to ask some questions about your student's thoughts on classes this semester. If you know she/he could benefit from any resources, know that the deans in Academic Advising are available to help any student with guidance in achieving goals and can also identify support for academic challenges. In addition, reflecting on the current semester's successes and challenges are a great way to start thinking about planning for the upcoming semester. Students often question their major of interest, how to balance courses, and how to complete Wheaton's academic requirements. Here is where advising comes in!

All students are required to meet with an assigned faculty advisor each semester. Often, advisors will check in with your child, ensure that the student is making academic progress, then focus on developing an academic plan for the upcoming semester. Conversations often include discussions of majors, Wheaton requirements, plans for study abroad and internships, and even possible research opportunities. Advising is a very holistic process, and addresses all aspects of your student's academic and college experience, and we want to make sure your student is at the center of it.

For our first-year students, they work with their professors from the First-Year Seminar, who will serve as their faculty advisors until they declare a major and are assigned to a faculty member in an academic department. Along with the faculty advisor, our trained preceptors work closely with these first-year students to provide them with a thorough student perspective and intentional guidance through the advising process. In the third week of October, preceptors meet with all first-year students, where they review Wheaton course requirements and teach students about their Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP) Audit. The CAPP Audit details what requirements students have completed, those that are in progress, and the remaining requirements for graduation. Pulling together all of this information, first-year students are then prepared to meet with their advisor in the last week of October to develop next semester's plan.

Once they have an agreed course plan, all students register for courses during the first week of November through an online process administered by the Registrar's Office. Each class year has one designated day, starting with seniors on Monday and ending with first-years on Thursday. They can register for a maximum of 4 credits (courses) on their designated day. The online system will go live at 8 a.m. each morning, and each class year has 24 hours to complete the process. Once all class years have registered, then there is one additional day when all students have access to the registration system at 8 a.m., and they can now register for a maximum of 5.5 credits. Registration proceeds in order of class year as we need to be mindful that those students with less time remaining need to have priority for certain courses in order to complete their academic programs. Students should make every effort to register for a full course load during registration week, since Wheaton's faculty and staff are prepared to support this process at this time.

So you may be thinking, what if my student doesn't get her/his courses? Our goal, as a partnership between student and advisor, is to assist all Wheaton students in creating the best possible academic

schedule, and the college works very intentionally to offer appropriate course availability. Because these situations occur, students should always have alternative course options to select during registration, and after registration week advisors and faculty can work with students to consider other options and possible changes. If adjustments need to be made, your student can work with an advisor or a dean in Academic Advising and then visit the Registrar's Office to process any changes.

Early on in a student's college career, academic planning and course selection can be a rather stressful process, so reinforce that faculty advisors, deans, college staff and even well trained student mentors are available. We, faculty and staff, understand the needs of your child as a college student and seek opportunities to support them at every point of learning and transition. As a parent, we encourage you to empower them to take action and connect with the faculty, staff and other available resources as we all share the same common goal of academic success for your student.