Faculty Advising Enhanced with Personalized Website

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Background:
Connection to a faculty member greatly improves students’ university experience, yet many barriers can hinder the faculty/advisee relationship. Instructors have many demands with teaching, research, service requirements and have little time to devote to advisement. At the same time, students often feel overwhelmed and are not sure where to get the information they need to succeed at the university. Students today spend hours on the Internet and are comfortable using it as a first step towards a relationship with their advisor.

Where to begin:
First decide if you want a public or private site. Next, consider what information you want to provide on your site. Talk to students to learn what information they would find most helpful. Several free options are available for designing your site. Google sites available at googlesites.com has easy to follow instructions, templates, designs and allows embedding of gadgets and videos. http://www.google.com/sites/help/intl/en/overview.html provides simple directions.

Solution:
Creation of a personalized Website saves time and can serve as a link for the student and advisor.

Benefits of a Website:
• Provides photo and background of advisor paving the way for the first advisor/student meeting
• Gives key information such as office hours, location and advisor’s interests
• Offers links to important information such as the academic calendar, university clubs, curriculum requirements, information about the major, academic resources and career guidance

How to Use:
Send the link along with a welcome message at the beginning of the school year and each new semester.

Students’ Responses:
Advisees say the site provides one easy place for their advisement needs. Rather than searching and feeling frustrated and unable to access the advising information they need, they are able to find most of the resources they need organized in one Website. After receiving the Website as a way of introduction, students make an appointment to meet with the faculty advisor. For today’s students, the Website breaks the ice and paves the way for a relationship with the advisor. A well planned site allows the student to receive the advising help needed anytime and anywhere.