# TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is academic advising?.................................................................................................................. 3

Advising Policy.................................................................................................................................. 3

How do I prepare for advising?........................................................................................................... 5

Why is ME Advising required every semester?.................................................................................... 7

General Education and University Graduation Requirements (GE/GR)........................................... 7

Catalog Rights.................................................................................................................................... 8

Application for Graduation.................................................................................................................. 9

Resources............................................................................................................................................ 10
WHAT IS ACADEMIC ADVISING?

Academic advising is a process through which faculty members help students select courses, plan for completion of their academic programs, and explore graduate studies and career options. Academic advising focuses on strategies to achieve success in the academic program; this includes not only study and preparation for courses, but navigating the University, getting the most out of the college experience, learning to balance work and play, learning to live away from home and successfully moving into the adult professional world.

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING ACADEMIC ADVISING POLICY

All Mechanical Engineering students must meet with an advisor each semester before registration. Students are free to select any advisor – there are advantages to always seeing the same advisor, and there are advantages to seeing multiple advisors. While each faculty member is engaged in different areas of professional activities, all advisors will give consistent information regarding the curriculum, pre-requisites and planning. Take this opportunity to get to know your faculty!

An academic advisor’s particular role depends on the student-advisor relationship. The basics are:

• to get to know the students and to stay up-to-date with each student's academic progress.
• to help each student find accurate, up-to-date information about the University's academic offerings and requirements.
• to assist the student in developing a course of study which fit the student's academic background and educational and career goals. This includes addressing major requirements as well as GE/GR requirements.
• to provide the student with information on campus resources and support areas and offer appropriate referrals.
• to offer the student advising assistance and support should academic difficulties arise.

In addition to major advising, all Freshman and Sophomores have advising requirements met by appointments at the Academic Advising Center.

Advising months are generally October (for registration for Spring) and April (for registration for Summer and Fall).

Faculty advisors will make time available during specified advising hours or by appointment to meet with advisees. During the advising meeting your advisor will look at the “plan” developed in previous semesters and help you add to that to assist your timely completion of the program. Additionally, the advisor will:

• compare what the student is taking to the list of courses advised for that term
• create a list of courses the student should take for the following term. Students must be sure to follow pre-requisites. If you have questions about the curriculum of pre-requisites make sure to ask.
• discuss ME course content – especially electives
• discuss your course load including how many units you are comfortable with
• remind the student to check your MySacState at least weekly
• discuss graduation date and remind you to apply when you are within a year of graduating
• discuss transfer credit. Make sure to send the University official transcripts and send the ME Dept. office an unofficial copy of any transcripts.

Feel free to talk to your advisor. Remember, every one of your faculty earned a BS in engineering so they understand what you are doing.

• Other discussion topics – work/internships, career fairs, ME Evening With Industry, resume writing, living situation, getting involved in clubs.
• Other questions you may have are:
  o Is this the right major?
  o What happens if I fail a course?
  o What is academic probation and what should I do to get back on good standing?
  o How do I prepare for F.E. (E.I.T) Exam?
  o Can I take 200-level ME courses?

A sample advising plan for first time freshman Albie N. Engineer is shown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisor</th>
<th>Courses Advised</th>
<th>Courses Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SH 6/11</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>Engr 6, Math 30, Chem 1A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
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<td>Summer 2015</td>
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<td>Fall 2015</td>
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<td>Spring 2016</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduation expected: Spring 2017
Advisor Comments:
Your advisor will complete the form, save it in your file and email you a copy. If there are any comments, suggestions, or clarifications (including substitutions) that are to be made in the student’s program, your advisor should make a note of them on the advising slip. Please ask your advisor to include his/her name and the date.

The advisor will notify the ME office that you have been advised. The ME office will not remove your registration hold until notified by the advisor. Remind your advisor to notify the office.

**HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR ADVISING?**

Class schedules are always available on line from the Sac State web site (http://websweb1.irt.csus.edu/class_schedule/). Before each advising month the Mechanical Engineering Department will try to have a current list of electives and grad courses for at least the next 2 semesters.

Advising meetings should be goal oriented. Focus on determining how to maintain progress, ensure success in the courses you are taking this term, and determine what courses to take in the next term. Make sure to think about what your goals are (graduation by a certain time, studying abroad, graduate school, internship, competitions, etc.). Ask questions!!

The ME office will try to have information about what kinds of scholarships, co-op programs, internships, etc. are available and about student clubs to provide you with experiences to explore your mechanical engineering career.

The Mechanical Engineering Department makes an effort to standardize the ME schedule of required courses so you can plan multiple semesters in advance. The curriculum roadmap is available in the Mechanical Engineering Department office (RVR 4024) and on line (http://www.ecs.csus.edu/wcm/me/academics/index.html).
Make sure to consider your time limitations and be realistic when preparing a schedule; take into account work schedules, athletic practice, campus involvement - or maybe just the fact that everyone should eat lunch.

Always use at the final exam schedule when making your plan. Often students who insist they want a Tu-Th schedule (NOT RECOMMENDED) will decide that is not in their best interest when they look at how finals are scheduled.

Your advisor may not have all the answers but will assist in finding the resources or contacts needed to answer your questions. Also remember that the folks in the Mechanical Engineering Department Office (RVR 4024) are there to help.

**WHY IS MECHANICAL ENGINEERING ADVISING IS REQUIRED FOR ALL BS STUDENTS EVERY SEMESTER?**

Studies have shown students who are see their advisors regularly are more academically successful and complete their programs more efficiently. An added benefit is that as you move through the program faculty can provide you with career input,
resume tips, job leads, and when it comes time to write those all important letters of recommendation you will have a faculty member who knows you well.

Check the Mechanical Engineering Department office or the ME webpage for an updated "advising hours" list.

**GENERAL EDUCATION AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (GE/GR)**

In addition to ME Major Advising, freshmen and sophomores are required to complete mandatory advising at the University’s Academic Advising Center. The Academic Advising Center has created an FAQ about academic policies and procedures (http://www.csus.edu/acad/faq/index.html). This site provides answers to general questions from how to drop a class to the limit on repeated courses.

All information about GE/GR and University requirements is available online. The GE/GR site (http://www.csus.edu/schedule/Fall2010Spring2011/generaled.html) provides answers about the GE/GR program. Remind the students of the importance of completing their GE/GR while they are completing their major.

The GE program is not particularly complicated and it would be most ideal if students could have most questions regarding GE and graduation requirements answered during Mechanical Engineering advising. The “Academic Requirements” page in your Student Center of your MySacState record has the status of all requirements – not attempted (red), in progress (yellow), satisfied (green).

Mechanical Engineering majors must complete the GE course pattern for engineering students. Some of the major requirements overlap GE. In general the GE program can be viewed as a number of requirements that need to be filled, and there are lots of courses that engineering students enjoy and say complement the major courses. Ask your advisor and your fellow students which GE courses they enjoyed and why.

GE for engineering majors is slightly different than for other majors at Sac State. Briefly these differences are:

- Areas A3, B1, B3, B4, and E are met by courses required for the major
- Only one course is required in the D1 area
- Only two upper division GE courses are required outside the major (and one will be Writing Intensive). Senior Project counts for 3 units of upper division GE and Area E.

The University Academic Advising Center (Lassen Hall) specializes in GE but Mechanical Engineering advisors should be able to handle most questions.
There are additional Graduation Requirements that are usually discussed with GE. These are the second semester of English Composition, the foreign language requirement, and the GWAR which is satisfied after fulfilling the WPJ requirement and taking a GE Writing Intensive course.

There are some courses available at local community colleges that can “double count” – the two areas are second semester of composition and Area C, and foreign language and Area C. Be careful about this because this is not always the case.

Always ask!

CATALOG RIGHTS

Students are generally guaranteed that they can follow the requirements that are in place when they started college at a CSU or California Community College. Specific catalog rights are based on where you have gone to college, when you enrolled, and if the enrollment has been “continuous”. This is all explained in the catalog, but briefly, continuous enrollment, therefore catalog rights, begin when a student first enrolls in a CSU or California Community College after highschool graduation and those rights are maintained as long as the student is enrolled in at least one semester or 2 quarters every CALENDAR year.

Since the GE/GR program hasn't changed much in the last 10 years this is not really that much of an issue for students at this time, but students should maintain continuous enrollment and finish their program because if these requirements change GE could be an issue.

A student has 3 options for catalog rights. The major can be completed on one and GE can be completed using another. The options for catalog rights are:

• Catalog in effect when enrollment at CSUS is begun
• Catalog in effect when graduation occurs (this is generally the preferred choice for the Major/Minor requirements on the Graduation Application)
• Catalog in effect when enrollment at another CSU or CCC is begun (as long as continuous enrollment is maintained.)

APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

Students must apply for graduation. Academic degrees are not granted automatically!!

After you have completed 90 units of the major you will be invited to apply for graduation through a message in your MySacState. Graduation applications are all done on-line. After you have submitted the application it must be reviewed and approved by an advisor and the Dept. Chair. At the time of the review/approval all substitutions must be noted.
RESOURCES

**MySacState** – you should log into their MySacState at LEAST once a week. ALWAYS check your schedule to make sure you are enrolled in what you THINK you are taking. Also, at least weekly you should check for important messages from the University including registration appointments messages about reg fee payments!

**Academic Requirements** - The “Academic Requirements” page in your Student Center of your MySacState is useful because it categorizes all your work by requirement category. Work that is transferred from another college is logged in and displayed in the appropriate locations. The Academic Requirements page also lists what requirements have to be completed.

[www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org) - This site has detailed information regarding equivalent courses at other colleges.

**GE/GR requirements** - [http://www.csus.edu/schedule/Fall2010Spring2011/generaled.html](http://www.csus.edu/schedule/Fall2010Spring2011/generaled.html)

Many questions can be answered by looking at the catalog – everything from grading to AP equivalencies is described.

**Sac State Catalog** - [http://catalog.csus.edu/current/first%20100%20pages/academicpolicies.html](http://catalog.csus.edu/current/first%20100%20pages/academicpolicies.html)

**Academic Advising** (Lassen Hall 1013) - [http://www.csus.edu/acad/](http://www.csus.edu/acad/)

**Career Center** (Lassen Hall 1013) - [http://www.csus.edu/careercenter/](http://www.csus.edu/careercenter/)

**Health Center** (WELL) - [http://www.csus.edu/hlth/](http://www.csus.edu/hlth/)

Most questions can be answered by searching the Sac State website.