INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMICS AT RICE

José and Mayra Onuchic
Academic Philosophy at Rice

- Individualized Undergraduate Experience
- Intellectual and Personal Relationships with Faculty
- Grounding in Broad Fields of General Knowledge
- Concentration on Specific Academic and Research Interests

Distribution Courses Provide:
- Understanding of Literature, Arts, and Philosophy Essential to Any Civilization
- Broad Historical Introduction to Thought about Human Society
- Basic Familiarity with Scientific Principles Underlying Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics

Major Courses Provide:
- Concentration in Specific Areas of Interest
Learning in and out of the Classroom

Opportunities are Abundant:
- Academic Department Initiatives
- Office of Academic Advising
- Fellowships and Undergraduate Research
- Study Abroad
- Center for Civic Leadership
- Center for Career Development
- Leadership Rice
- Student Organizations and Residential Colleges
Academic Advising at Rice

- Faculty Advising with a Lot of Support
- Starts in Residential Colleges
- College Masters – Oversee Academics in College
- Divisional Advisors (more info next slide)
- College Associates
- Peer Academic Advisors (PAAs)
- O-Week Advisors & Co-Advisors
Divisional Advisors

- Faculty Members with Unique Insight & Experience
- Represent Academic Schools or Divisions:
  - Humanities       Anne Chao
  - Social Sciences  Stephen Klineberg
  - Natural Sciences George Bennett
  - Engineering     George Hirasaki
  - Business        Rick Schell
  - Music           Gary Smith and Geoffrey Scott
  - Architecture    Christopher Hight

- Generalities of Respective Divisions
- Academic Rules & General Graduation Requirements
- Specific Information about Own Discipline
College Associates

- Committed to residential college and mentoring its students
- Introduction to program, meet an Associate who has agreed to mentor O-Week group during transition to Rice
- Provide mentoring and serve as a sounding board for ideas
- Have general knowledge about Rice and resources across campus
- Facilitate connections for mentoring and guidance both academically and personally
Major Advisors

- Represent Academic Departments or Programs
- Specific Knowledge of Discipline
- Specific Knowledge of Department Rules & Regulations
- Specific Knowledge of Major Graduation Requirements
- Solicit Advice before Declaring Major
- Assigned Advisor after Declaring Major
Office of Academic Advising

- Mission Statement – “To Provide an Unparalleled Environment for Students to Explore Opportunities, Identify Goals, and Implement Plans to Reach Those Goals”

- Provides Information & Support for “Community of Advising”
  - Masters, Divisional Advisors, and Major Advisors
  - Associates (Faculty/Staff)
  - Resident Associates and College Coordinators
  - Collaborative Offices
  - Peer Academic Advisors (PAAs)
  - O-Week Coordinators, Advisors & Co-Advisors
  - Academic Fellows/Mentors
  - All Undergraduate Students
  - Offers specialized advising for students pursuing health professions, law school, and graduate school
O-Week Advising Schedule

- **Monday: Introduction to the Rice Academic System**
  - Introduction to Rice Academics by College Master
  - Divisional Advisors and O-Week PAAs are Introduced

- **Monday: Introduction to Divisional Advising**
  - Meet with Divisional Advisors in Groups
  - Considerations Relevant to Divisions (Eng, Hum, NS, SS)
  - Consider Fall Course Schedule
  - ESTHER Course Registration Planner Becomes Available

- **Monday: Specific Academic Orientations**
O-Week Advising Schedule
(continued)

- **Tuesday Morning: Academic Planning in College**
  - PAAs Present Relevant Information and Logistics
  - Continue Academic Planning for First Semester
  - Ask Specific Questions of O-Week PAAs & Advisors/Co-Advisors
  - Prepare Questions for Faculty Advisors

- **Tuesday: Lunch with Associates**
  - O-Week Groups Meet with Associates
  - Enjoy Lunch & Discuss Follow-Up Meetings

- **Tuesday Afternoon: Academic Fair**
  - “Shopping” for Academic Interests
  - Speak with Representatives from Any Academic Department
Wednesday Morning: Academic Planning in College

- PAAs Present Relevant Information and Logistics
- Discuss Plans and Ask Questions of DAs, O-Week PAAs, and O-Week Advisors/Co-Advisors
- Choose Elective and Alternate Courses
- Explore Educational Opportunities (e.g. Study Abroad, Community Involvement, Leadership Rice, Research, Career Development)
Wednesday/Thursday:

Potential Appointments with Divisional Advisors

See “Meeting with Faculty Advisors”

Conversation Might Include:

- Your Personal and Academic Interests
- Your Background and Preparation for Courses
- Your Academic Plan for This Semester (with Alternatives)
- Your Tentative Academic Plan for Future Semesters
- Balance and Commitments in First Year
- Arrangements for Follow Up Communication
O-Week Advising Schedule (continued)

- Thursday Afternoon – Course Registration Planner is Set
- Friday Morning Registration Results
- Friday Follow Up with O-Week PAAs
  - Any Academic Follow Up Questions
  - Comfortable with Your Schedule?
  - Balance and Commitments in First Year
  - Arrangements for Follow Up Communication
Academic Resources

- General Announcements (GA) [http://ga.rice.edu](http://ga.rice.edu) Definitive Guide to Rules & Regulations
- Definitive Guide to Graduation Requirements
- Outlines Student Responsibilities – “Students are responsible for making certain that their plan of study meets all degree and major requirements.”

- Academic Advising Website:
  - [http://oaa.rice.edu](http://oaa.rice.edu) - list of all contacts and resources

- Academic Fair:
  - Academic Discipline-Specific Information

- Academic Departments – Major Advisors
Peer Academic Advisors – PAA’s

- Brandi Ranson
- Zhifan Li
- Nicky Joseph
- Kenan Davis
Graduation Requirements

Major: Requirements Vary Greatly

At Least 120 Total Hours (Some are More)

48 Hours of Upper Level Credit (300 or 400 Level)

First Year Writing Seminar (3 Credit Hours)

Lifetime Physical Activity Program (1 Credit Hour)
Courses and Credits

- Classes: Typically M-W-F or T-Th (can vary)
- Labs: Typically 1-2 Afternoons

- Credit Measured in “Hours”
  - Most Courses are 3 Credit Hours (varies)
  - Labs & Some Courses are 1 or 2 Credit Hours
  - Typical Course Load: 15 Credit Hours (5 Courses)
  - < 12 or > 20 Hours: Requires Approval
## Total Credit Hour Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete at least 120 hours (some degree programs require more)</td>
<td>BA in History requires 30 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major degree requirement + 60 hours = Total hours needed</td>
<td>30 + 60 = 90; so the total needed defaults to 120</td>
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<tr>
<td>If the sum is less than 120; it defaults to 120 hours.</td>
<td>BS in Mechanical Engineering requires 72 hours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>72 + 60 = 132; so the total hours required is 132</td>
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Graduation Requirements (continued)

- Lifetime Physical Activity Program (LPAP)
  - One 1-credit course required

- Completion of a First-Year Writing Intensive Seminar (FWIS)
  - Introductory writing course
Composition Exam

- Regardless of your score, you must take a FWIS course to satisfy the graduation requirement

- Results Distributed:
  - Instructions on How to Access will be Posted on Academic Advising Website: [http://oaa.rice.edu](http://oaa.rice.edu) under – Your Flight Path - Freshmen Year (Registration and Placement Information)
Major Declaration

- Completing a major is a graduation requirement
- Multiple majors allowed but not always desirable (talk to your divisional advisor)
- Major declaration deadline
  - Spring semester of second year
- Major can be declared earlier than deadline
  - Engineering prefers declaration 2nd semester 1st year
  - Major advisors should be consulted before declaration
Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Transfer Credits

- AP Credit: Need Scores of 4 or 5 (6 or 7 for IB)
  - Can Check Posting of Credits on Esther

- Transfer Credit:
  - Lower Level Usually Granted by Registrar
  - Upper Level Usually Needs Department Approval

- AP, IB, & Transfer Credits
  - May Fulfill Requirements (Distribution, Graduation, Major)
  - No Grade on Transcript/Does Not Affect GPA
Using ESTHER (http://esther.rice.edu)

- ESTHER: Employee and Student Tools, Help, and Electronic Resources
- Register: Add & Drop Courses
- View Course Catalog & Schedule of Courses
- Check Holds that Might Prevent Registration
- Look at Current Course Schedule
- View Transcript (AP/IB & Transfer credit)
Registration Process

- **Tuesday-Thursday:**
  - Login to ESTHER (User ID & Log In PIN)
  - Check Holds on Account (Try to Resolve)
  - ESTHER Tentative Course Registration Planner Available

- **Friday Morning (7 AM):**
  - See Which Courses You are Registered for, and ESTHER Opens for Add/Drop Period

- **Special Registration Form:**
  - Courses Requiring Instructor Permission
Changing Registration

- First Two Weeks of Classes
  - Access ESTHER and Register, Add, or Drop Courses

- Later Deadlines: Can Drop Courses
  - Fees Apply - see General Announcements
  - Every Semester Until End of Seventh Week of Classes

- FIRST SEMESTER ONLY
  - Can Drop Until Last Day of Class
  - Not Usually Good Idea to Wait That Long
Pass/Fail Rules

- **Pass-Fail (P/F) Option:**
  - Earn 1 for Each Full Year at Rice (Max of 4)
  - Only one course designated P/F per semester
  - Can Designate a Course P/F Electronically
  - Can Convert Pass (P) to Grade:
    - End of 2nd Week of Following Semester
  - Can P/F a course within your major department **as long as** the course is not used to fulfill a Major graduation requirement

- **CANNOT:**
  - P/F a course used to satisfy Major graduation requirements
  - Same rules apply for courses used to satisfy Minor requirements
Academic Assistance

- Don’t Hesitate to Reach Out to Advisors/PAAs
- Talk to Professor of Course, Faculty Master(s), Divisional Advisor, or PAA
- Utilize Academic Fellows/Mentors Societies
  - Voluntary Service Organization in Each College
  - Devoted to Academic Life in the Colleges
- Consult Office of Academic Advising
Time Management/Study Skills

- Academic Ability ≠ Academic Performance
  - Know Yourself & Be Realistic About Workload
  - Transition to Rice & Residential College Life
  - Prioritize Commitments & Schedule Study Time
  - Find a Time & Location to Study
  - Library & Other Academic Resources
  - Balance Schedule: Academics & Health
  - Consult Peer Academic Advisors and Fellows for Study Skills & Time Management
Additional Assistance

Office of Academic Advising

Website: oaa.rice.edu
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