



**Senate Higher Education Committee:** Representative from the University of North Texas

Good morning, my name is Monica Saunders and I am an orientation leader representing the University of North Texas. Currently I am a sophomore and will be attending for the University of North Texas for a third semester. I personally have had positive academic advising experiences while attending the university. I came to the University of North Texas to originally double major in Communication Design and Entrepreneurship. From high school, I transferred in with college credit due to my score in the International Baccalaureate Program. During freshman orientation, I was advised to attend the advising section for the major I desired most. I attended the session for business and before I left orientation I visited the Visual Arts and Design advisor. When I explained to the advisor my plans, she made clear to me it was not recommended to double major with Communication Design. The intensity of the Communication Design program would not allow me to major with entrepreneurship and graduate in four years. I appreciated the honesty of my advisor because I was completely uninformed before orientation of whether my plan to double major with these majors was plausible. I wanted to start off on the right foot for college, if I had gone into classes preparing me for Communication Design I could have wasted some of my hours for college. Now I am just pursuing a major in Entrepreneurship. Advising during orientation was helpful for me because the advisors helped me know what classes were appropriate for my major. Even though it was not really a one on one with the advisor I still appreciated the attention I received because as an incoming freshman I was completely lost on what I needed to sign up for at registration.

During the fall I visited my advisor before the upcoming spring semester and I was able to make sure I had made the correct choice on what classes to take. By visiting my advisor she made me aware of what grades were required for each class. She checked to confirm that I had an even distribution in my class load so that I could do my best in the semester to come. Furthermore my advisor helped me decipher what my IB credits meant to my hours at the university, with her help I also decided to pursue a minor in Spanish, which I was only 6 hours away from finishing at the time.

As an orientation leader I help the advisors assist the students in planning their schedules for the fall 2010. Orientation leaders usually advise students that are in their college. While I have helped in advising the students in the College of Business, I noticed most of the students are just confused on what classes to take or what they do with the class credit they are transferring in. During orientation the advisors stress to the students that they should visit them in the fall to help them with their spring schedules. With the varying colleges though, the advisor's help during orientation is very critical to the student because they depend on the advisor to help them start off in the right classes. I have had some students confused about Honors College classes. Their required classes are different than the average student. Sometimes I feel the advisor does not communicate to the Honors College students that they need to take a certain amount of hours. I personally know students who did not know that they had to take a certain amount of hours a semester to graduate on time.

Lastly, I have friends that have had negative academic advisor experiences. One of my friends as an incoming freshman was signed up for Accounting 1. He did not figure out till too late that he was not supposed to be in that class. Accounting 1 is a difficult class and as a freshman he was

not prepared to take it. For some reason unknown to us his advisor had not stopped him from taking the class; he had not even completed the prerequisites for the class yet. Because he did poorly in the class he only has one more chance to retake it, if he does not pass he cannot be a business major. A mishap like this jeopardizes a student because the ability for them to pursue their major rides on the outcome of one class.

Within the academic advising system there are helpful and unhelpful advisors, but everyone's experience is different. We all can learn from the various situations we hear about to either help change or improve the advising structure. Academic advising overall at the University of North Texas has benefitted the students. A majority of the advisors are advantageous to have at our university, which is great for a student like me because I want to graduate on time and in the right way!

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