



3.6 Academic Program Unit

Definition

The academic program unit (APU) at the School of Design and Construction (SDC) is comprised of academic coordinators, the academic program manager, and the clerical assistant. This unit serves in the best interest of its program(s) and/or college, and in the best interest of the school. These interests are not mutually exclusive and the academic program unit should operate with this understanding.

The academic coordinators are responsible for advising and supporting students; participating in recruitment and retention activities (including the SDC ambassador program); and assisting with industry recruitment and alumni relations for programs in architecture, construction management, interior design, and landscape architecture.

The academic program manager oversees the academic program unit with additional responsibility for travel experience development and administration; and advancement of marketing, communication, recruitment, and retention.

The clerical assistant performs clerical support tasks for academic coordinators and the academic program manager relative to advising; student file maintenance; student communication; and recruitment and retention activities.

Guiding Principles

The academic program unit will:

- Support all academic programs and the SDC equally;
- Accomplish functions in a timely manner;
- Utilize efficiency while preserving opportunities for face-to-face interaction;
- Be knowledgeable and familiar with faculty/staff/students and program/SDC needs;
- Maintain ability to respond to priority needs;
- Be a service-oriented environment;
- Employ best practices;
- Uphold clear lines of responsibility and supervision;
- Remain flexible and committed to adjustments as necessary;
- Preserve staff morale.

Position Responsibilities

Academic Program Manager (APM):

- Management of academic program operations and personnel;
- Organization of academic courses (schedules, fees, evaluations, curricular and catalog changes, departmental room usage);
- Coordination for teaching assistant application and award process;
- Development of study tour/education abroad programs;
- Management of marketing/recruitment; website content; social media.

Academic Coordinators (AC in matrix below)

- Provide advising and academic support for undergraduate and graduate programs in architecture, construction management, interior design, and landscape architecture (as assigned) to include:
 - prospective student recruitment (e.g. on-campus visits and SDC Ambassadors);
 - major certification (e.g. applications, requirements, and acceptance letters);
 - academic progress and graduation (e.g. SAP, reinstatement, to-do lists);
 - professional development (e.g., on-campus interviews, career services);
 - student retention, program data collection, and assessment activities;
 - curriculum (e.g. course schedule data entry/maintenance, catalog and curricular changes)

Clerical Assistant

- Performs clerical support tasks for academic coordinators and the academic program manager relative to advising; student file maintenance; student communication; and recruitment and retention activities;
- Perform other duties as essential for the effective operation of the programs and the SDC.

Unit Structure

The academic program unit works directly with program heads, graduate program head(s), and the director regarding items broadly outlined in the areas of curriculum and advising; recruitment and retention; and other school and program support. Supervision of academic coordinators is provided by the academic program manager in combination with program heads, graduate program head(s), and the director. Annual reviews for academic coordinators will be completed by the director with input provided by the academic program manager, program heads, and graduate program head(s) as essential.

Academic program unit staff are administrative professionals (AP) who perform managerial, professional, research, public service, extension, or combinations of these responsibilities; whose work is critical to the success of the SDC and its academic programs; and who are exempted from coverage of the Title 357, Washington Administrative Code under the provisions of the Civil Service Rules.

Expectations for AP positions at the SDC focus on the job, not time or tasks that are hourly. Some weeks or months require more work, and some weeks or months require less, but the expectation—regardless—is that the job gets done and that school needs determine employees' specific work schedules. Failure to meet deadlines and expectations outlined in sections 3.6 through 3.9 of the SDCPPM, and/or receipt of excessive complaints from students, faculty, or other university offices, will be addressed by the academic program manager, program head(s), and/or director as appropriate.

Additional Resources

For additional reference please see the Administrative Professional Handbook (hrs.wsu.edu).

Unit Responsibility Matrix

Program Management	APM	AC
1. Manage day-to-day operations and services, policies, procedures, and staff personnel for the academic program unit and provide students, faculty, and the public with information and interpretation of policies and activities relative to academic programs;	√	
2. Serve as member of leadership team and provide feedback, information, and guidance regarding the current and future directions of the school;	√	
3. Provide oversight for development and implementation of semester course schedules, teaching assignments, course fees, course evaluations, curriculum changes, catalog updates, and departmental room usage;	√	
4. Administer teaching assistant application and award process each semester;	√	
5. Provide assistance with coordination and promotion of SDC events;	√	√
6. Serve on SDC, college, and/or university committees and assist with assessment and accreditation activities as requested;	√	√
7. Work towards resolution of academic problems and deficiencies, and address specific student needs;	√	√
8. Assist with curricular and catalog changes, semester course schedules, and course evaluations as applicable;		√
9. Study tour/education abroad development, administration, and execution.	√	
Advising	APM	AC
1. Serve as the main point of contact and provide academic advising for students;		√
2. Participate in continuing education/training for advisors;		√
3. Assist students in selecting appropriate courses, developing degree plans, and monitoring progress;		√
4. Work with students to ensure requirements are met (admission, certification and/or graduation);		√
5. Administer creation and dissemination of student correspondence and maintain accurate student files for use in advising;		√
6. Coordinate with appropriate university offices relative to admissions, certification, academic progress and/or graduation;		√
7. Prepare documentation and assist with reinstatement and SAP appeal processes in a timely manner each semester in accordance with established procedures and deadlines.		√

Marketing, Recruitment, and Retention	APM	AC
1. Contribute to and assist with the management of program data collection and assessment;	√	√
2. Assist with development and implementation of articulation agreements with community colleges;	√	√
3. Provide coordination for the SDC Ambassador program;		√
4. Manage school, college, and university recruiting events (i.e. Alive, Experience, Preview, FCOD, Week of Welcome, etc.) and meet with prospective students;		√
5. Assist with school, college, and university recruiting events (i.e. Alive, Experience, Preview, FCOD, Week of Welcome, etc.) and meet with prospective students as necessary;	√	√
6. Manage content maintenance for the SDC website and social media pages (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) to include writing and editing content, updating imagery, and handling student job postings;	√	
7. Manage creation and dissemination of marketing materials for recruitment and retention (e.g. websites, social media, brochures, promo items);	√	
8. Manage job placement and professional development activities (on-campus interviews, exit surveys, etc.) for students in the SDC;		√
9. Perform other duties as essential for the effective operation of the programs and the SDC.	√	√

Unit Operations

The APU is committed to providing a full range of services during the normal business hours (8am-5pm, Monday through Friday) as follows:

- 1) Office Schedules
 - a. In the event APU staff needs to be gone during the business day, an e-mail to your immediate supervisor and posted signage on your office door should indicate your absence.
 - b. Academic advisors are responsible for communicating their regular schedules to the academic program manager and posting them clearly outside the advising center. This includes communicating when sick, late, or out of the office. Additionally, academic advisors should cc the director on this correspondence. The academic program manager should inform the director of his/her regular schedule and posting hours and schedules outside his/her respective workspace.
 - c. Annual leave for all staff is scheduled with approval of the director and should be requested a minimum of one week in advance.
 - d. The academic program manager and administrative assistant will work together to establish schedules for the front-desk student workers.

- 2) Drop-in Hours
 - a. There are designated drop-in hours each day when academic staff are available for general questions (less than 10 minutes).
 - b. Students seeking assistance during non-drop-in hours will be directed to the front desk and/or asked to e-mail his/her advisor to make an appointment.
- 3) Appointment Hours
 - a. Academic staff set specific hours each day for scheduling advising appointments, or appointments that are specific to meeting with students in designated advising areas. Please note, these are separate from, and different than, drop-in hours.
 - b. Students seeking assistance without an appointment and during non-drop-in hours will be directed to the front desk and/or asked to e-mail his/her advisor to make an appointment.
- 4) Other Hours
 - a. Hours not designated for drop-in or appointments as defined above will be utilized for attending meetings and trainings, answering e-mails, working on projects, etc.
 - b. Schedules should be developed each semester or each academic year that support the implementation of items 1, 2, and 3.
- 5) Advising Tools and Resources
 - a. Efficient systems will be utilized to schedule appointments and communicate information to students including but not limited to use of online scheduling software and sign-in kiosk, and Blackboard.
- 6) Advising Policies
 - a. Students will be instructed to access existing tools on our website (<http://sdc.wsu.edu/academic-staff/>) including the Advising Syllabus and the Advising Homework documents.
 - b. Advisors will enforce student preparedness for appointments in order to respect the professional nature of his/her position and to help educate students about their responsibilities and expectations of active participation.
- 7) Communication Policies
 - a. With four professional accredited programs, presenting a positive and optimistic attitude regarding the school and the university is of utmost importance. Since staff is often the first point of contact for our constituents, the image of the school begins with each staff person. We always want our school and programs to be represented with respect.
 - b. In times of high-advising or in periods where response time may be impaired, a detailed out-of-office reply will be attached to e-mail. The following template may be adjusted depending on the circumstances:
 - i. *Thank you for your email. With the start of the semester, (or with certification/graduation/winter break/extended leave, etc.) the School of Design and Construction is currently experiencing a delayed response time to e-mails and voice mail messages. It may take us a few days to get back to you but we will do so as soon as possible. We appreciate your patience and understanding. >Signature<*

- c. In normal operations response time for voice messages and e-mails will be within two (2) business days of receipt—even if it is a confirmation that the inquiry has been received and that more time is needed for a detailed response.
 - d. For professional firms coming to recruit and interview students, advisors must work efficiently to respond to firm questions, set up presentation and interview rooms, obtain parking permits, and generally serve as host for the firm representatives. It is critical that all firms coming to recruit SDC students are welcomed and their accommodation is of the highest priority.
 - e. Front desk staff will be instructed on handling students and communicating academic program unit hours and access policies.
 - f. As stated above, staff is the first point of contact for the school's constituents. It goes without saying, presenting a positive and helpful demeanor is most important.
- 8) Unit Huddles
- a. Academic staff will meet regularly during each semester in what is called the “APU huddle” to ensure consistent communication and coordination of responsibilities.

Unit Processes

The following processes are cyclical each year, therefore the APU has established procedures and timelines in conjunction with university regulations for the items identified below. These timelines are prior to “last day” deadlines of the university but will be adhered to in accordance with our guiding principles. It is critical that staff work to meet university requirements and deadlines, follow the BPPM, and bring issues forward to supervisor(s) to find appropriate solutions. Coordination, adherence, and timely responses are a direct reflection on our school. In circumstances where deadlines and requirements cannot be met, staff is expected to communicate directly to their immediate supervisor so that the issues can be resolved and the information can be provided to the individuals and offices that will be affected.

- 1) Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
 - a. All paperwork, including the advisor letter, will be completed by the Friday before the first week of classes each semester.
 - b. Extenuating circumstances (such as needing to meet with a student prior to submission) may delay the possibility of completion. In this case, all paperwork will be completed no later than the Friday of the first week of classes each semester.
- 2) Advisor Interview Confirmation (AIC)
 - a. The Advisor Interview Confirmation (AIC) is to be completed for students on academic probation by the Friday of the first week of classes each semester.
 - b. Extenuating circumstances (such as needing to meet with a student prior to submission) may delay the possibility of completion. In this case, all paperwork will be completed no later than the Friday of the second week of classes each semester.
- 3) Major Certification
 - a. Academic staff responsible for managing the certification process will meet with program heads by April 1 (with ongoing communication as necessary) to finalize application documents, procedures, and timelines.

- 4) Graduation Progress, Application, and Clearance
 - a. Fall graduation: academic staff responsible for ensuring graduation progress, application, and clearance will meet with program heads by November 1 (with ongoing communication as necessary) to discuss any students of concern, exceptions, and waivers.
 - b. Spring graduation: academic staff responsible for ensuring graduation progress, application, and clearance will meet with program heads by April 1 (with ongoing communication as necessary) to discuss any students of concern, exceptions, and waivers.

- 5) Graduate Programs
 - a. Fall semester: academic staff responsible for graduate program support will meet with program heads by August 16 (with ongoing communication as necessary) to ensure documents (handbooks, admission materials, etc.) are up-to-date and posted on the website, and to determine timelines and procedures for the upcoming admissions and graduation cycle.
 - b. Spring semester: academic staff responsible for graduate program support will meet with program heads by January 15 (with ongoing communication as necessary) to discuss review of applications and admission notifications, and graduation deadlines for current students.

- 6) Professional Development
 - a. Academic staff responsible for coordinating professional development activities will meet with program heads by September 1 (ongoing communication as necessary) to discuss policies and procedures for managing activities for each program for the upcoming academic year.

- 7) Recruitment
 - a. Academic staff involved with and/or responsible for recruitment will meet with program heads, the director, and ambassadors on a regular basis to prepare for and manage ongoing recruitment activities.

- 8) Curriculum Management
 - a. The academic program manager will adhere to published deadlines in terms of course scheduling, curricular changes, catalog changes, course fee revisions, and teaching assignments, working with program heads and the leadership team to ensure submission of required materials.

- 9) Data Collection
 - a. All academic staff will participate in data collection efforts and use of data tools to enable efficient operations for the SDC and the academic programs, including but not limited to, data used for reporting demographics, job placement, enrollment trends and projections, scholarships and academic awards, accreditation, and assessment.

- 10) Other
 - a. All academic staff will perform other duties as essential and as reasonable for the effective operation of the academic programs and the SDC.