

# Advising program reaches for troubled undeclareds

By KELI OSBORN  
Of the Emerald

The University's growing commitment to undergraduate student services is bringing changes to academic advising on campus, including an outreach program aimed at "undeclared" students and a new advisor who will provide a link between the administration and faculty.

Jack Bennett, an English doctoral student with the rank of associate professor, began working last week for the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services as a full-time faculty advisor.

"I was hired to help improve advising for students," he says.

"University advising has been, for a long time, permissive — if not neglectful," adds Marliss Strange, associate director for Academic Advising and Student Services.

Bennett has worked temporarily as an advisor in the past for the University, and now will spearhead efforts to reach those students without declared majors.

"This is a group of students who need special attention," explains Strange.

The University Faculty Advising Committee gave Strange the "green light" Friday to begin what she calls a "more intrusive way of advising" undeclared students.

Academic Advising and Student Services will begin sending notices to undeclared students given academic warning — a courtesy action advising a student of potential difficulty with grades — explaining "just what it is," Strange says.

She adds that her staff will send follow-up letters to students who appear to be heading towards trouble.

Bennett says the office will drop its more passive stance that assumes students come in when they need help for an active one

that seeks out troubled students.

Increased attention to outreach is not the only change in store for academic advising, Strange says. Bennett's faculty position was created to improve relations with departments and give the office some needed clout with faculty, she adds.

Strange says her office is now developing a "system of communications" with departments. "We want to put our resources together," she says.

Departmental advisors don't always know how best to advise their students taking classes in other departments, she explains, and the peer and full-time ad-

visors in her office don't always know enough about the specifics of course content and the skills required for particular classes.

The Office of Academic Advising and Student Services needs a strong connection with the departments to ensure success of its advising programs, Strange adds.

Strange says it is often difficult to stress the importance of faculty advising for undeclared students to instructors more interested in students from their own departments.

"We have no carrots or sticks. People advise only when it's in their self-interest — or out of good will," she says.



Jack Bennett

Photo by Ed Warren

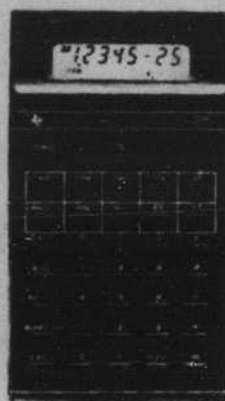
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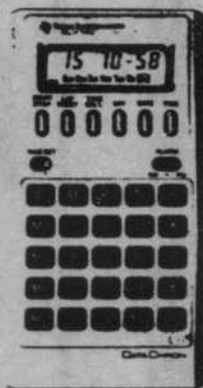
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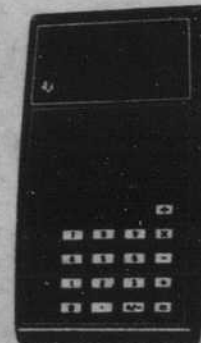
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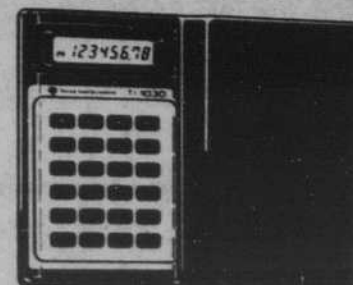
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