

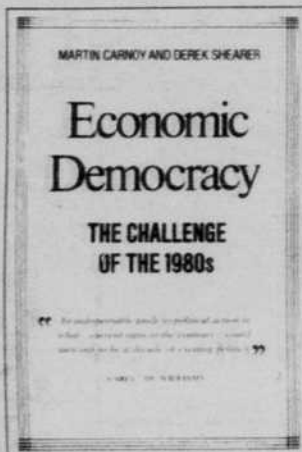


Photo by Mark Pynes

Dave Waterfall, left, a senior journalism major who is one of the founders of the journalism peer advising program, discusses the web of University and department graduation requirements with another student in the program's Allen Hall office. Journalism, which adopted the student-to-student academic counseling this year, is one of 11 University departments and schools that sponsors a peer advising program.

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Wed., Oct. 28
8 p.m.

EMU Ballroom
Free Admission

Peer advising program is expanding vigorously

By **PAM GOVERNALE**
 Of the Emerald

From a pilot project in the psychology department four years ago, peer advising has expanded into 11 University departments and five others now are considering adoption of the program.

"The peer advising program is solid now," says Debi Lance, student peer advisors' coordinator. "It can get as big as the University wants."

Peer advisors help free faculty to consult with students about research, practicums and graduate studies — areas that take advantage of the faculty's expertise — says Jane Degidio, program faculty coordinator.

The assistance peer advisors offer ranges from course descriptions to graduate school counseling, and from editing term papers to preparing for tests. All advisors are trained to help unravel the tangle of departmental and graduation requirements.

Peer advisors take a core training course, entitled "Paraprofessionals: Interpersonal and Organizational Skills." They are then placed in a specific department, usually in the advisor's major, where they receive training and orientation.

Students from departments that don't have peer advising are encouraged to take the course, and then work with Lance and DeGidio to approach the department about setting it up, Lance says.

In most departments, students drop in for advising. But other departments, such as psychology, may require students to check in at specified intervals.

Peer advising in economics is new this term. Nancy Gay, student coordinator for the economics branch, says that advisors plan to offer a file of course descriptions, seminars on careers for economics majors, and eventually a transcript monitoring system.

The crew of three advisors plan to expand the program if the demand by students increases.

Gerontology peer advising is now in its third year. In addition to the basic advising program, peer advising has developed a strong link with the Gerontology Association, says Delvon Hill, student coordinator.

The oldest peer advising program at the University is in psychology, which has worked out most the program's kinks and has become an integral part of the psychology department.

All majors must see advisors at the 90-credit hour mark, and must be screened through the peer advisors before meeting with their faculty advisors.

Co-coordinator Doug McBride estimates that 10 to 15 students come in daily for advising. A comprehensive array of services include a test file, transcript evaluation, graduate library, and practicum resources file. An advisor-initiated survey showed that 80 percent of the department's faculty were satisfied with the program.



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