

CHAPTER 8: THE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Roles & Responsibilities

Committee Interactions

SECTION A: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The SNL Academic Committee has many functions, roles, and responsibilities, but its main purpose is to provide assistance and guidance in completing your individual learning program. You are encouraged to use your Committee as a forum for discussing and assessing overall progress, for clarifying goals and purposes, and for providing resources and advice on Independent Learning Pursuits at various stages in the program.

The Academic Committee consists of you, the Faculty Mentor (representing SNL), and the Professional Advisor (representing your focus area). You may also opt for a fourth member, the Peer. Regardless of your SNL program, all students must have an academic committee. In the BAC students may have an assigned Professional Advisor, or may elect to have a Professional Advisor outside of DePaul who meets the requirements below. In the BAECE program, your Professional Advisor is assigned. [For more information about these programs see Chapter 11: Appendix.](#)

It is critical that all members of the Academic Committee be committed to the uniqueness as well as to the integrity of the SNL program. Committee members should have an attitude of flexibility toward possible sources and avenues of learning, taking into account your unique learning experiences and needs without sacrificing quality. Committee decisions are reached by consensus.

- 1. The Student.** You are the chairperson and central member of the Committee. You are responsible for securing counsel from other Committee members and for formulating an appropriate Learning Plan based on a combination of the advice received and of your own goals and concerns. Your responsibilities include:
 - a. Meeting individually with the Faculty Mentor and Professional Advisor in the discussion of the Learning Plan;
 - b. Finalizing your Learning Plan which all members should receive at least one week before the scheduled meeting;
 - c. Negotiating the specifics of the Learning Plan with the Committee;
 - d. Engaging in ongoing self-evaluation of progress and direction, maintaining accurate records and communication with Committee members about the status of the Plan, including reports on *Externship* and *Advanced Project*.

- 2. The Faculty Mentor,** who is also your Foundations Instructor, is responsible for:
 - a. Assisting you in the design of the Learning Plan, particularly with respect to H, S, and A categories, and the demonstration of L-4 and L-5;
 - b. Working with you and your Professional Advisor on the design, implementation, and evaluation of *Externship* and *Advanced Project*;
 - c. Helping to develop and assess appropriate Independent Learning Pursuits (in conjunction with TLA);
 - d. Approving your registration in *Guided Independent Studies*;
 - e. Attending Committee meetings, assuring that the Committee process meets the procedural requirements of SNL, and submitting payment forms;
 - f. Helping you seek innovative learning activities and alternative learning styles
 - g. Ensuring that your work meets the academic criteria appropriate to a BA degree from SNL and DePaul.

3. **The Professional Advisor.** If you are in SNL's Individualized program you select the PA, with the subsequent approval of SNL, or your Faculty Mentor will help you find one if needed; further information on this is below. Your PA is responsible for:
 - a. Assisting you in clarifying and developing your Focus Area and related goals;
 - b. Helping you with finalizing and/or clarifying the Learning Plan, particularly with respect to the Focus Area;
 - c. With your Faculty Mentor, approving the entire Learning Plan;
 - d. Working with you and your Faculty Mentor in the design, implementation and evaluation of *Advanced Project* and *Externship* (if you choose to create an independent *Advanced Project* or *Externship*);
 - e. Helping to develop and assess appropriate Independent Learning Pursuits in the Focus Area;
 - f. Attending at least 2 academic committee meetings (the first and final) and assuring that the standards of professional preparation are maintained;
 - g. Helping you seek innovative and alternative learning options.

4. **Peer.** You have the option to choose a Peer member of the committee, whose role is to advise, support and encourage you throughout the learning process and to offer constructive criticism. The Peer should be someone who knows you well and can therefore provide special support and encouragement. Your Peer will not be involved in the evaluation of your work, but is responsible for:
 - a. Helping you clarify goals;
 - b. Suggesting alternative learning strategies;
 - c. Counseling you on how to integrate school, work, and personal life;
 - d. Offering ideas for appropriate learning projects.

Choosing and Finding a Professional Advisor

In some cases, students will know someone who can serve as their PA. Sometimes, the student relies on SNL to recommend possible PAs. In each instance, you should think about the following questions when considering a PA:

- **Professional area:** Is the prospective PA a practitioner in your focus area or in an area related to your goals?
- **Personal style:** Do you and the prospective PA seem to be compatible in terms of communication style and expectations of the student-PA relationship?
- **Philosophy:** Is the prospective PA supportive of the SNL approach to adult learning?
- **Logistics:** Is the prospective PA available and times also available to you and your Faculty Mentor?

1. Professional Advisor Qualifications:

- ✓ Experience in your educational or goal area
- ✓ Knowledge of operant theories and trends in your goal area
- ✓ Masters degree or equivalent professional expertise
- ✓ Ability to provide at least 15 hours of contact over the period of your involvement in the Committee stage of SNL
- ✓ Openness to competence-based, non-traditional education and ability to be both critical and supportive

2. How to Find a Professional Advisor

Networking is an important professional and lifelong skill. While SNL will help you identify potential Professional Advisors, we encourage you to spend time networking your own contacts to find a suitable PA. See also <http://ask.depaul.edu>.

Whether you have identified your own PA or have had one suggested, you'd need to speak with her or him (by phone or face-to-face) to ascertain an appropriate fit. You will want to discuss the possibility of his or her participation on your Academic Committee, and the potential for an effective working relationship. Once you have made a choice of a PA, complete the PA Nomination Form on the SNL Undergraduate Forms website; you will need to upload your PA's resume in PDF format. Your nomination will then be reviewed by your Faculty Mentor. **Note:** It is important to complete this process during *Foundations*.

SECTION B: COMMITTEE INTERACTIONS

1. Relationships

The **Professional Advisor's** relationship with you, the **Student**, includes advising, counseling, and evaluating. Your PA helps you clarify your focus and direction (goals); your plan of activities, schedule, and milestones (Learning Plan). This relationship may be both formal and informal. Much contact is through email, one-on-one meetings, and telephone. The PA walks a fine line as your advocate, exploring unique and creative ways that you can succeed and accomplish your goals, and also as an evaluator assuring you meet the criteria and standards established by SNL and the profession.

The PA's relationship with the **Faculty Mentor** is vital in ensuring your complete and consistent support. The Faculty Mentor assures that the academic standards, criteria, and processes are appropriately applied. Discussion and collaboration between the Faculty Mentor and PA is essential to ensure that the advice and direction given to you is consistent, clear, focused, and supportive.

2. Initial Sequence of Activity involving your PA:

- a. You will first make contact with the PA and introduce yourself and explain the SNL program (should they not be familiar with it) and your particular focus area goals. You should also share the link to Professional Advisor information at <http://snl.depaul.edu>.
- b. The prospective PA may introduce himself/herself (if this is a cold call), and clarify his/her expectations of you (if they are former PA's)
- c. As a result of this contact, you and the PA may mutually determine if this is a good fit
- d. If so, you should provide the PA with drafts of your Professional Goal and Action Plan, Learning Plan, and resume or Student Profile Summary. (See Chapter 9 Workbook. for this form)
- e. Ask for a copy of her or his resume, and submit for your Faculty Mentor's review via the PA Nomination Form on the SNL Undergraduate Forms webpage. Through the review of your Learning Plan and Professional Goal Setting and Action Plan, you should ask your PA to provide you with initial feedback on
 - Clarity and appropriateness of educational goal/s
 - Clarity and appropriateness of career goal/s
 - Clarity of knowledge/skills to be achieved in the Individual Focus Area (for example, are you focusing on general business, entrepreneurship, management, or professional preparation?)
 - Knowledge/skills valuable to your goals that are **not** covered in the Focus Area
 - Your proposed competencies

- Proposals or ideas for *Externship* and *Advanced Project*.

Note: At this point, you may well have some gaps in your Learning Plan. You may not have a specific plan or schedule for a course or independent study; you may not know what you want to do for *Externship* and *Advanced Project*. These gaps should become agenda items for your First Committee Meeting.

3. First & Final Committee Meetings

The PA will participate in both Academic Committee meetings. The minimum number of meetings is two, the First Committee Meeting, shortly after *Foundations*, and the Final Committee Meeting. Additional meetings can be called if deemed necessary by you, the Faculty Mentor, and/or the PA. The agenda reflects the issue(s) you will address. The average time per meeting is about one hour. The outcome of the First Committee Meeting is the approval of your Learning Plan, including the assessment of your Focus Area.

FIRST AND FINAL COMMITTEE CHECKLISTS

FIRST COMMITTEE MEETING CHECKLIST

After you have identified and contacted an appropriate Professional Advisor, use this list to prepare yourself for your First Committee Meeting.

Professional Advisor:

- ✓ Meet with (in person or by phone) your PA to discuss your goals and plans
- ✓ Make sure your PA has had time to look over your Learning Plan, Professional Goal and Action Plan, or Student Profile Summary prior to the First Committee Meeting
- ✓ With your PA & Faculty Mentor, identify possible times for a committee meeting.

Faculty Mentor

- ✓ Make sure she or he has the most recent copy of your Learning Plan & Professional Goal and Action Plan
- ✓ Call or email your committee members to confirm meeting time and place. Share phone numbers with your Faculty Mentor if you are meeting by conference-call.

Peer: (Optional)

- ✓ Meet with and discuss SNL, your educational goals, and the role of the Peer
- ✓ Make sure Peer has most recent copy of Learning Plan and other materials
- ✓ Contact for First Committee Meeting.

Agenda:

1. Introduce members and review their roles.
2. Review your desired outcomes of the meeting.
3. Review your career goals, educational goals, and your learning style and what implications these have for the shaping of your plan.
4. Discuss L competencies you have achieved thus far, and how you will continue to develop these skills.

5. Discuss your Professional Goal and Action Plan, and review FA plans (prior and/or new learning).
6. Discuss and document on appropriate forms the title of your Focus Area (see below).

Note the DePaul degree attained through SNL is a Bachelor of Arts, and therefore reflects the values of a liberal arts education. You, the student, design your Focus Area in consultation with your Academic Committee. An integral part of our individualized liberal arts competence-based structure, the Focus Area is not considered an “official major” as so defined by DePaul University, and therefore cannot be titled as such. As with all undergraduate degrees at DePaul, no specific major is written on the diploma; however, the title of your Focus Area will be listed on your transcript. Consult the following website for a listing of current academic majors:

<http://www.depaul.edu/academics/undergraduate/majors/Pages/default.aspx>

7. Review prior learning already approved in H, S, and A categories, discuss course plans and review proposals for Independent Learning Pursuits.
8. Discuss *Externship* and *Advanced Project* plans, if appropriate.
9. Delineate time frames & decide on communications procedures.
10. Recap and document decisions.

Required Documentation

- ✓ Learning Plan with clear notes of agreed-upon changes, and Learning Plan cover page signed by all Committee members.
- ✓ Accepted Focus Area competence assessment forms (including the Assessment of Focus Area Plan if you require a grade change for F-1) and evidences initialed by the Faculty Mentor and signed by the PA (if ready).

FINAL COMMITTEE MEETING CHECKLIST

When you are nearing completion of your learning plan, it is time to convene the Final Committee Meeting. Check the calendar at <http://snl.depaul.edu> under Student Resources > Graduation for **Final Committee Meeting deadlines** and update and send your Learning Plan to your Faculty Mentor at least two weeks before the meeting. Expect to be asked to reflect on your development, your experiences in learning, and future learning goals in this meeting.

Preparation (at least one quarter before your Final Committee Meeting:

- ✓ Make sure you apply for graduation. See <http://snl.depaul.edu> under Student Resources > Graduation.
- ✓ Check your records against your Degree Progress Report (DPR) in Campus Connect.
- ✓ Send final draft of your Externship and Advanced Project (if independent) to Committee for review.
- ✓ Call or email to get feedback on your drafts; make revisions and/or changes where necessary.
- ✓ Expect some questions on your work and its implications at Final Committee Meeting.
- ✓ Update or revise your Learning Plan to reflect the changes made since your first meeting.
- ✓ Make sure you have registered for: Externship, Advanced Project, and Summit Seminar.
- ✓ If you are taking a course during your final quarter, you may complete that course after your final meeting.
- ✓ All other work, including your Advanced Project and Externship, must be submitted before the

- Final Committee Meeting, according to SNL deadlines.
- ✓ Confirm the date, time, and location of your meeting. If you are planning to meet by conference-call, make sure your Faculty Mentor has all phone numbers prior to the meeting.
 - ✓ Send all updated documents, including your Learning Plan, along with your completed Advanced Project and Externship, if appropriate, to your committee.

Key agenda items:

1. Ensure that all work is completed, documented, and your academic file is complete (this may be accomplished in a separate meeting with your Faculty Mentor)
2. Discuss the *Externship* and *Advanced Project*
3. Clarify decisions by the Committee on the acceptability or required revisions on work received if appropriate
4. Revisit your Focus Area title, making sure it is accurate and added to all appropriate forms
5. Reflect on the original goals of your program of study, assess their achievement and discuss your growth and development as well as future plans
6. Reflect upon specific learning experiences in and out of SNL
7. Discuss progress and accomplishments in the Lifelong Learning Area
8. Make sure you have obtained information to prepare for *Summit Seminar* and graduation
9. Reflect on SNL and the Committee process
10. Share congratulations!