

Major Discovery: Advising Undeclared Students

Each year, approximately 2,100 undergraduate students at VCU find choosing a major difficult, designating themselves “undeclared.” Representing 10 percent of the student body, undeclared students leave the university in higher numbers than do declared majors. Why? Without clear goals, these students find it difficult to stay motivated.

“There are different types of undeclared students – those who have no idea what they want to do in life; those who know what they want to do but don’t know what to major in; and those who are debating between two or three majors,” said Seth Sykes, UC assistant dean.

The University College Discovery Advising program helps unde-

“We work with each student individually and help them define their educational and career goals...”

Seth Sykes,
UC assistant dean



Marilyn Day advises a student in the UC.

clared students decide on and stick with a major. The program provides individual advising for students; a UNIV 101 course focusing especially on the career decision-making process; a UNIV 103 career counseling course; and a guest lecture series involving representatives from university programs and departments.

“We work with each student individually and help them define their educational and career goals, which really makes a difference,” said Sykes. “Projections for this year indicate that the first-year retention rate for undeclared students will be comparable to declared majors.”

Contact UC academic advising at 827-8648.

UC Advisor Spotlight: Charlie Daniel

Education: I received my bachelor’s degree in elementary education with a minor in psychology; I received my master’s degree in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in college student affairs.

What is your advising specialty? Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Liberal Studies for Early and Elementary Education.

What do you like the most about your role as academic advisor? I love interacting with students.

What do you think is the most important part of your job? Helping students meet their educational and personal goals to help them make the most of their college experiences.

What is your advising motto? Treat every student as an individual and make sure they take an active role in planning their educational careers.

What do you think is the most common misunderstanding about academic advising? It is an easy job that anyone can do.

Fill in the blanks: To get the most out of their college experience, students should combine one part open-mindedness, two parts commitment and mix with belief in themselves.

Anything else you’d like to add.... The UC is a wonderful place that strives to provide incoming students with the resources they need to assist them in a successful transition to college. The staff is great, and we are committed to our students.



Charlie Daniel

New Students' Parents Prepare for the College Experience

This fall, VCU will welcome a new group of first-year students...and with the students comes a new group of supporting parents and family members. Guided by the belief that the college experience is a collaboration between students, their families and the faculty and staff of the university, the Freshman Parent Association aims to involve family members in the success of first-year students.

"We want to be a partner for parents in the education of their students," said Martha Lou Green, UC associate dean. "Continuing parental support sends a strong message of caring and involvement, and when parents are informed and involved, the students benefit."

The Freshmen Parent Association allows parents and supporting fam-

ily members to take an active role in the education of their student by providing parents with a forum for networking with other VCU parents and improving communication between parents and the university.

Additionally, the UC offers several services to help families support their first-year college students. Parents attending New Student Orientation benefitted from addressing their new role as college parents. Parents can also become involved on campus through special events, like FallFest, which feature a number of activities for families.

For more information, contact Green at (804) 827-8123 or e-mail mlgreen@vcu.edu.

Did you know?

More than 4,600 incoming students attended an orientation session this summer.



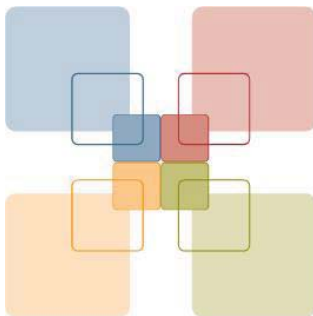
A New Look for the UC

What is the goal of the University College? What programs and services does the UC provide?

The UC is on a mission to make sure the VCU community – faculty, staff and students – is aware of the programs and services the UC provides to the entire campus.

Through a newly designed web site and cohesive informational pieces, the UC has ramped up efforts to promote its four main components – academic advising, learning support programs, the core education program and new student programs and orientation.

"Our communication initiative is intended to make it easier for faculty, staff and students to understand and remember the programs and



services we provide," said Jon Steingass, dean of the UC. "The initiative will help us to get the word out about what we do, so even more students utilize the UC's exceptional resources."

In addition to a new look and navi-

gation scheme, the new UC web site includes more detailed program information, a student-success centered blog, weekly student spotlights and first-hand accounts from those involved in UC programs. The goal is to increase two-way communication between the UC and those it serves.

For more information, contact Jenny Pedraza, coordinator of communications and marketing at the UC, at 827-3975 or jjpedraza@vcu.edu.

Visit the new UC web site at www.vcu.edu/uc.

Student Voices



The theatre production, "Student Voices," explored the varied experiences and changing relationships many new college students encounter. VCU students performed the production, which was held in Raymond Hodges Theatre in the VCU Performing Arts Center, during New Student Orientation sessions this summer.

The UC Buzz is published monthly by VCU's University College. The UC enhances student engagement and success by providing a central home for academic support services and the core education program.



An equal opportunity/
affirmative action university

Virginia Commonwealth University
University College
900 Park Avenue
P.O. Box 842002
Richmond, Virginia 23284-2002

