**Student Service Plan**

Describe your involvement in your departmental academic advising plan, specifically indicating how you will advise students during the academic year.

**Example I**
Host at least one Career Open-House for students interested in learning more about career opportunities in science, technology, mathematics, or engineering (STEM). Promotion materials and a list of students in attendance will be provided as evidence of completion of this plan.

**Reflection**
Promotion of this event was definitely key to its success. Several colleagues suggested that I create an event on Facebook to promote the open house. At first I was reluctant because I was concerned a lot of non-GRCC students would attend. But after working with another faculty member who knows more about Facebook than I did, I created the event. I then promoted it to students who I knew were on Facebook and attend GRCC. Between that and word of mouth, the open house gained a lot of energy. More than 60 students attended. Many students had some idea of what types of careers they might pursue, but many of them did not have accurate information about emerging trends in STEM fields, the courses necessary for entering those fields, nor the potential income they might earn. While it was my commitment to host the open house, I learned quickly that I would need a team of co-hosts. Fortunately several other faculty pitched in and the event went well.

**Examples of what I learned about myself as a faculty member**
Most of my knowledge stems from knowing the courses necessary for entering STEM-related fields. I learned early on that I needed to brush up on current and emerging trends in STEM fields. Robotics, the study of ecosystems, sustainability, and all things green seem to be changing daily. Keeping abreast of the career opportunities is daunting. I learned that I really benefitted from working closely with librarians and other faculty. I also learned that students who have any desire to enter STEM-related fields have to start early—solid grades in math, science, reading, and writing in high school are very necessary for college success. That led me to be more in tune with high school curricula and more engaged with high school teachers and counselors.

**What I might do differently**
Hosting a career open-house was a lot of work. If I do this again I will have to start earlier and enlist the help and support of others. I really needed a sub-team to help with the marketing so that I could focus on developing more helpful materials. I also will likely invite guests—faculty or staff from area STEM-related businesses. There was a lot of time devoted to talking with students about course requirements and potential careers. But it would’ve been even more helpful to have people from the community who work in STEM fields to be available for students to meet and converse.
Example II
Hold additional face-to-face or online weekly office hours for students interested in learning more about transfer opportunities to Ferris State University’s pre-pharmacy academic program. A roster of students advised will be provided as evidence of completion of this plan.

Reflection
Many students responded very positively to this project. They really seemed to enjoy and benefit from the office hours being focused on one transfer program. I continued to advise and refer students who were interested in other universities and programs, but very quickly I became the “go to” person for the FSU pre-pharmacy program. I discovered early on that this project required partnering with colleagues at FSU. The pre-pharmacy program is intricate and very competitive—on more than once occasion I had to call their College of Arts and Sciences to clarify pre-requisites, admission rates, exceptions, and other details. I suspect I learned as much as some of my students! Maybe because they’re local…I’m not exactly sure why, but many of our students underestimated the rigor of the pre-pharmacy program and level of competition to get into the actual School of Pharmacy at FSU (or anywhere). While this project was designed to be student-centered, I truly enjoyed the experience and benefit of getting to know faculty at FSU. I knew some of them before this project, but focusing in with a particular cohort of very dedicated students deepened our collaboration.

Examples of what I learned about myself as a faculty member
I learned at least three important things about myself: 1) I really enjoy mentoring dedicated students and advising them about how to best prepare for careers. That gave me a very rewarding opportunity to talk about my academic discipline which renewed my commitment to teaching—it refreshed my enthusiasm; 2) academic requirements, even in established programs can change (I learned that I have to keep on top of things!). I benefitted from working closely with Erin Busscher to clarify some issues about transfer credits. I also found it helpful to have monthly check-ins with the Educational Counselor at FSU’s College of Arts and Sciences. They weren’t always extended conversations, but just checking in was a good safety net; 3) I learned that working with students who have very high standards is hard work. Any of the science fields are competitive and students have to be prepared with a Plan B. Being candid with students who are not going to make the cut and need to reconsider their options can be brutal. That is especially true for students whose parents have set their career goals. Students have to develop their own goals and that is sometimes a rough road for them to travel.

What I might do differently
What started as weekly office hours quickly turned into a career and mentoring club for students. I need to reconsider how I can best pace this sort of project. I will definitely continue the work, but it was easily a substantive project or more. I also need to work with
the librarians and counselors to create a student resource guide or center for students interested in learning more about pre-pharmacy programs. I think I spent too much time finding information that others may have already had within their reach. I did collaborate, but it was sometimes “just in time” rather than planned. I have a better sense now of what I need to know and have at hand before students ask or need something.