It is with a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm that I welcome you to the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts for the academic year 1996-97.

Among the many exciting things you will have to look forward to is a visit to the newly established LSA Academic Advising Center which now serves as the focal point for improved student services in Student Academic Affairs. You will be delighted to hear that the mission of the Center, located in 1255 Angell, is to be more flexible in adapting to the changing needs of students, to be more responsive to student needs, to target specific student populations for specialized services, and to create an environment where the student always come first.

The Center consists of three new service units: First Year Advising Services, General/Upper-class Advising Services, and Senior Services. This new arrangement is intended to provide you with services appropriate to and clearly focused on your length of time in the College as well as with more opportunities for in-depth advising appointments. You should begin to see improved coordination of advising activities in the College.

The First Year component will concentrate on active advising and support for those of you who are making the sometimes difficult transition to college. The goal is to help you feel connected and confident by the end of your first year.

The General/Upper-class unit primarily will help sophomores and juniors as you select concentrations and consider professional degree requirements. The unit will be working with academic departments to develop concentration advising information. This unit will also take a leadership role in providing support for transfer students new to the College.

Finally, the Senior Services unit will assist in ensuring that those of you who are seniors have met your degree requirements and that you are prepared for graduation and employment or further education. Seniors can expect assistance with letters of recommendation to graduate and/or professional schools.

Another development all of you should find helpful is the LSA Student Academic Affairs Home page on the Web. Located at http://www.lsa.umich.edu/saa/, this Web site has information ranging from current or past Course Guide descriptions to the Advising Center’s outreach program in the residence halls and much more.

As always with the implementation of any change, we are anxious to hear directly from you. Please don’t hesitate to call any staff member in our area or send us an email if you have any concerns. Again, it is with a great deal of excitement that I welcome you to campus. You have my personal best wishes for a productive and successful academic year.
Setting a Direction for the Academic Advising Center

Louis C. Rice, Acting Director for the new Advising Center, says that “first and foremost this year we want to work on the design and development of services that best meet the needs of our first-year students. I would like our Center to be more approachable, more available, and more informed than ever for first-year students.”

“A top priority,” Rice continues, “will be for us to understand and assess the real needs of our first-year students so that we can begin to tailor our advising services to best meet those needs. We know they want a one-on-one personalization of advising and we will work to that end, and we will certainly work as a support service to them which is another thing we hear.

Above all, however, we must work hard to empower these new students to act for themselves. We must help them learn about all the academic resources available to them as students in the College and help them learn how to choose for themselves. We would like them to feel competent, confident, and independent as a result of their visits to the Advising Center or our outreach branches after the course of a year.”

Rice says he wants the Advising Center to provide comprehensive academic advising service for LS&A students, a place that makes “very limited referrals,” a place where students can do “one stop shopping.”

First-Year Student Services

The first unit of the Advising Center that most students will have contact with is First-Year Student Services, and the Associate Director in charge of this new unit is Virginia Reese. Reese says, “I intend for the first-year component to provide a comprehensive and seamless fabric of services which will help students make the transformation from successful high school students to equally successful college students. Our services for students will address learning study and time management strategies necessary to perform at this new level of academic expectation; introducing the various academic resources available and how to apply them to individual needs; and acquiring a broad knowledge of the available academic opportunities and learning how to select the best components for an individual’s program. Easy access to information and consultation through a variety of sources will be our goal.” In addition to her responsibilities for leading the Advising Center’s summer orientation program, advisor staff training, peer advising for the Advising Center, supervising the Students’ Counseling Office, and coordinating efforts to help LSA international students adjust to the US academic culture, Reese will also serve as the Advising Center’s liaison to the LSA learning communities and to the Office of New Student Programs. Reese says her unit will concentrate heavily on one-on-one advising and support for students whether they are first-year students or yet undecided on a degree program or concentration. She hopes all first-year students “will learn how to navigate the system by the end of their first year and will feel confident and connected.”
The second component of the Advising Center is that of General Advising. Here April DeConick will direct concentration advising, including Organizational Studies and the individualized concentration program, and general studies advising as well as the Center’s pre-professional advising and the advising of students who are pursuing a joint degree between LS&A and some other school or college on the Ann Arbor campus. DeConick will also supervise the Center’s efforts at monitoring and assisting the progress of students who are on academic probation, and she will be responsible for the orientation of new transfer students to the College. Hence the advising of most sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are finishing their concentrations will come under DeConick’s direction. DeConick says, “I will be focused this first year on ways in which advisors can best help students select their concentrations or consider pre-professional degree requirements.” She expects small-group meetings on specific topics to help in this effort, and she will be working to get the word out about these meetings as early and as widely as possible.

The third and final unit within the Advising Center is Senior Services. Harry Marsden, Associate Director for Senior Services, intends to focus on two services this first year of the Center. First, a new computerized academic audit system (the Michigan Audit Reporting System, MARS) is in process of development and implementation, and this system will allow students to monitor their own progress towards a degree. The system was tested this past spring with two hundred concentrators in the departments of Biology and Economics and their feedback has been analyzed and used to make further improvements in the auditing system. “This system is for all students, not just seniors,” says Marsden, “and this represents a real fundamental change in our College. Unfortunately, it will take another two to three years for full implementation of the system with all our concentrations, but when it is available for each department students will be able immediately to get on Wolverine Access and have better information available to them than they often have been able to get in a short time in the past. This will allow advisors to focus on truly giving advice to students and to explore more fully with them their individual interests.” In conjunction with further implementation of MARS with more departments in the College, Marsden says he and the LS&A Academic Auditors, whom he supervises, will be reaching out to students with ninety credits or more to ensure that these students have met all their degree requirements and are prepared for graduation.

Marsden says the second service to receive special emphasis this year will be “the Dean’s Recommendation forms that are required of applicants by many law schools and a smaller, but prestigious number of medical schools.” Marsden is developing one-stop shopping for students who need to have these forms filled out and taken care of. Students may simply turn their forms in to the front reception desk at the Advising Center, and they are now going to receive “complete and personalized service in the handling of these important forms.”
The Office of Academic Standards

The educational policies and practices of the College are stated in the *LS&A Faculty Code*. The Academic Standards Board in the Office of Academic Standards and a number of related offices are responsible for interpreting and implementing the academic policies set forth in the *Faculty Code*.

Members of the Academic Standards Board are able to help students individualize their programs of study and may grant exceptions to College-level academic policies and degree requirements. A student may discuss with a Board member and, if necessary, petition in writing for a waiver or modification of College rules. (Honors students petition the Honors Academic Board; Residential College students petition the RC Board on Academic Standing.) Exceptions to LS&A policies may be granted if a student presents evidence of unusual circumstances or has an alternative proposal to specific requirements consistent with the spirit of those requirements.

Board members also administer academic discipline. Each term the Board, after reviewing the academic records of LS&A students who show evidence of academic difficulty, acts in accordance with the policies described in Chapter IV of the *LS&A Bulletin*.

Finally, the Academic Standards Board also has responsibility for readmitting to the College students dismissed because of unsatisfactory academic performance.

Charles Judge, the director of the new Office of Academic Standards, states that he has three goals for the staff to work on this year. “First, we must work on defining that fine line for when exceptions should or should not be granted to any student’s petition. We want to reach a very high level of consistency in Board members’ decisions, and we also want to remain within LS&A policies.

Secondly, we want the office to be a very efficient operation. I want us to get our responses to students out as quickly as possible, and we will work hard at doing this.

Third, and finally, I would like the Board members to determine where we may be seeing any patterns of problems that our students are encountering. Are there places, in our view, where our LS&A policies and procedures need to be improved or altered? If so, then let’s make some recommendations to the appropriate bodies in the College.”

What is the Students’ Counseling Office?

Located in G150 Angell Hall, the LS&A Students’ Counseling Office is staffed completely by undergraduates and offers a unique comfortable atmosphere in which to obtain relevant academic information. Providing peer counseling, SCO presents students with an opportunity to share and receive experiences in an informal fashion. The office maintains such resources as course evaluations and examinations. It disseminates information about the newest and most innovative classes. SCO also stocks graduate catalogs from schools across the country as well as the latest in post graduation materials. During the Fall term the office will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday through Friday. You can stop by or give them a call at 763-1553.

Website Under Development

The development of an LS&A Student Academic Affairs website is in progress and may be accessed at [http://www.umich.edu/saa/](http://www.umich.edu/saa/) The site currently contains a welcome from Assistant Dean Nurse; a division on the Academic Advising Center that contains everything you want to know about advising, degree requirements, and LS&A rules; academic calendars for the fall, winter, spring, and summer terms of 1996-97; a division on Academic Information and Publications that contains current and past Course Guides, College Bulletins, and handbooks, as well as listings of courses approved for such requirements as Race & Ethnicity and Quantitative Reasoning; a division on special academic opportunities that focuses on LS&A learning communities, study abroad, and scholarships; and a division on Academic Standards that provides information on probation, dismissal, and academic misconduct. Browse through our site and then let us hear from you about what kind of additional information you would find most helpful. You may send your suggestions by email to us at ask.lsa@umich.edu.