

University of Iowa optimizes student advising

redLantern's degree audit has been available on the University of Iowa campus for almost 18 years. Within recent years, it has been incorporated into our student and advising web interfaces. This not only saves paper but also allows students, advisers and administrators to obtain accurate information in a timely fashion.

At Iowa, audits are immediately available via the web for newly admitted students. The new student sees high school information including class rank credentials, units completed, subject area deficiencies, testing and placement information, prior course credits from either transfer work or dual enrollment from high school and a template of general education requirements with specific course requirements by major. By having the opportunity to review audits upon admittance, students and their advisors have a clear understanding of where the student stands with respect to graduation requirements and any questions concerning transfer credits can be quickly resolved.

Audits continue to be available throughout the student's academic career. We have audits for every undergraduate program of study including our pre-professional programs, several "interest" areas which are not yet fully defined major programs and minors. We have also encoded audits for several post-undergraduate programs.

"What-if" audits are available through the student self-service and administrative portals for those students exploring additional majors or a possible change of major. Advising sessions, more than ever before, are centered on student goals, dreams and possible careers because identifying past, present and future course loads to satisfy graduation requirements is a simplified task with the degree audit. We believe early and continual access to the degree audit enables our students to more easily graduate in four years.

In addition to aiding students in monitoring and planning their paths to graduation, our administrative offices utilize the "analysis table" feature of the audit to speed the daunting task of admitting students to programs with highly detailed admissions requirements. We also have automated the graduation clearance process using analysis table data to the point that a majority of students clear without any human intervention. Graduation certification that previously took a month or more for administrative staff to process is now accomplished within a matter of days following the receipt of grade reports.

As a testament to the quality of this software, we are in the process of developing our own custom-built UI student information system using contemporary technologies and redLantern continues to be an integral part of that project. We are excited to be a beta test client for the new 4.0 java version of u.achieve and expect this software to continue its great service to University of Iowa students far into the future.

