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HNR 499

Reflection on the Pre-Veterinary Medicine Advising Tips Senior Project

Over the semester, I compiled information from outside sources and my own knowledge I've gained throughout my undergraduate years to provide additional advice to Grand Valley State's pre-veterinary advisors. I completed this project with questionnaires, organizing the information, and compiling it all into a useful document. This project produced unexpected challenges, but I am very proud of the work I have produced; hopefully, it will prove useful to our advisors and future pre-veterinary students.

To start, I made a questionnaire for advisors and for students to gain an understanding of existing knowledge in the community and identify gaps on where to provide more information for the advisors. Coming up with questions for a questionnaire that were useful was much more challenging than I had expected; I had an idea of what I wanted to ask about, but I had to figure out how to ask it in a meaningful way. Receiving feedback prior to sending it out really helped refine the questions. Too many of my questions were open-ended which would have produced non-useful results. I added confidence scales to many questions to get a better understanding of how many students and advisors were guessing on their answers and to help provide information on where students felt there was a need. I ended up needing to extend my timeline for my questionnaire from three weeks to five weeks in order to account for editing my questionnaires and waiting for responses. Getting responses back took a bit longer than I had expected, but I was overall happy about the turnout of responses with twenty students and all of the advisors responding.

Organizing the information from the questionnaires was not too difficult. I identified several areas that could use improvement including, but not limited to, knowledge of what defines each category of experiences, testing requirements for schools, and advising students on obtaining experiences and internships. I then was able to find resources to fill in more areas of advice for the project. Overall, I found it quite challenging to keep on top of this project throughout the semester. When a project runs a semester long and other deadlines are coming up each week for other classes, I found it very easy to push off obligations for this project throughout the semester. Every few weeks, I would have to tell myself to prioritize this project and work on a few things, whether that was research or compiling the information.

While the questionnaire was still out in circulation, I met with Alexis Schewe from CLAS advising to get her thoughts on the project. She suggested I include advice on how to work with students who are in the middle ground and are more difficult to advise because there is not an immediate or obvious fix. I really liked this idea and included my best ideas on how to help these students in my final project.

Compiling the information into a useful document proved the most challenging part of this project. Part of the challenge was staying on top of the project with other pressing assignments throughout the semester. The other part of the challenge was deciding how to present the information, which I ended up deciding on one large pamphlet. The other component that made this piece so challenging was that it was very difficult to convert the presentation of the information to a delivery for advisors rather than my peers, which I have been so used to doing as an executive board member of the Pre-Veterinary Medicine Club at Grand Valley for the past several years. I had been so used to helping my peers that transitioning to helping advisors help their advisees was so abnormal and a different feeling. At the beginning of compiling information, I felt like I was overstepping a bit on the advisors' role, but I realized that I am trying to help the entire pre-vet community at Grand Valley which requires our advisors to gain more knowledge too. Once I came to terms that that helping the advisors increase their knowledge was not overstepping, I got into a great groove on my project.

My project advisor, Joe Jacquot, suggested that in addition to what I decided to cover in the project, to look at the biology advising website for any improvements that might be helpful. After reviewing the website, I found it to be a very helpful resource for students. If other pre-vets are like me, however, they may not be aware of this page or remember all of these good resources. As an advisor, I would remind any advisee about the biology website's pre-veterinary advising page at a first meeting or even at another meeting a year later. The one suggestion I would make would be to link APVMA site because all Pre-Veterinary Club members are APVMA members as well.

Throughout this project, I struggled at each stage, but I was able to overcome these challenges. I feel that I made a project that will be beneficial to the entire GVSU pre-veterinary community. The questionnaire was a great starting place to get a handle on what knowledge exists in the community. Organizing the results and obtaining more research was only challenging because I felt so many other assignments and tasks from other classes need priority because they were due sooner. Compiling the information was the most rewarding part of the project because I was able to put together a useful document to increase advisors' knowledge of pre-veterinary preparation. I thoroughly enjoyed this project and hope it is useful for years to come.