

Kinesiology professor earns first Faculty/Instructional Staff Advisor Award

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Kinesiology Professor Craig Biwer became the first recipient of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's commendation for faculty academic advisers, the Faculty/Instructional Academic Staff Advisor Award.

The award is the first of its kind at UW Oshkosh and recognizes commitment and excellence in faculty advising. The Advisory Council for Comprehensive Academic Advising selected Biwer because of the number and diversity of nominations he received.

Director of the Undergraduate Advising and Resource Center (UARC) Elizabeth Whalley said faculty participation in advising is a "multi-faceted and complex" responsibility that deserved to finally be recognized.

"It is critical that we as a campus recognize the value of good advising," she said.

Biwer received three nominations for the award from students and faculty on campus, with one nomination letter containing the personal stories of multiple students Biwer has worked with. Recently graduated kinesiology student, Amanda Bergesen, was one of the nominators and praised Biwer for his work as both her adviser and teacher.

"He goes above and beyond the requirements of his job to make sure his students are getting the most out of the Kinesiology program," Bergesen said.

Biwer said he didn't expect to receive the award as he didn't know his students had nominated him. He said the award was affirmation of the great impact his work has on students.

"I am flattered, humbled and quite surprised," Biwer said. "The impact I have on students is greater than I thought. It does mean a great deal that the efforts I put forth into my students' future are not lost on them."

Biwer, who is also the director of the strength and conditioning program, has been teaching at UW Oshkosh since 2005 and began advising in 2007 under the University's newly adopted advising model. The new method, which went into effect in 2004, was known as the total intake model and increased faculty participation in advising.

Under the new model advising professors work alongside the UARC to help students be successful in their academic life. Once students declare a major and meet the criteria set by that program, they transition from advising at the UARC to a faculty adviser within their major who will offer guidance specifically related to their field of study and career goals.

Melissa Lantta, an adviser for the College of Letters and Science in the UARC, said Biwer has developed a particularly successful partnership with the UARC that has benefited both his students and his advising work.

“The partnership that has been established between Mr. Biwer and the UARC is integral to the success of the students,” Lantta wrote in her nomination letter. “I feel confident that when I refer students to Mr. Biwer they are getting the help and support they need.”

Lantta said she has collaborated with Biwer to provide additional support for struggling students and their partnership has developed an outstanding academic advising program on both fronts.

“I learn more about the major and department from Mr. Biwer and he learns more about best practices in advising from me,” Lantta said.

Biwer also praised the work of advisers in the UARC for their accessibility and helpfulness. He said receiving the award and reading the nomination letters is a reminder of his impact on students and pushes him to further improve upon his advising work.

“I need to keep in mind that each minute I spend with a student could possibly change their education path, future goals or point of view, for better or worse,” Biwer said.

The award will honor a faculty adviser in the fall and spring of each year, with Biwer being the first. Along with the recognition, recipients receive a \$100 Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce gift certificate and copies of their nomination letters.

Though this award provides recognition on a University level, multiple UW Oshkosh advisers have been recognized on a state level for their advising work. In September three UW Oshkosh advisers were recognized by the Wisconsin Academic Advising Association for their excellence in student advising, one of these advisers being a student part of the Peer Advising Liaison program. This program assists students who have questions about the University or feel overwhelmed with their transfer to campus life.

Bergesen said Biwer’s work is an example of the excellent guidance provided by the entire UW Oshkosh advising program.

“I have always had a positive experience with the UW Oshkosh advising program,” Bergesen said. “I am thankful for the personal attention that is offered and great direction in choosing an academic pathway.”

Learn more:

- [UW Oshkosh Advising Resource Center](#)