



# THE ADVISOR ADVOCATE

## What is the University College?

Just like Humanities and Social Sciences, Health and Human Services, or Fine Arts, the **University College** (UC) is a college at IUP but it exists for incoming students who are undeclared majors ("Exploratory" majors). The college works with Exploratory Studies and the Major and Career Exploration Center to help students discover the direction they would like to take at IUP and after graduation.

### Why was the University College created?

Undeclared students would start their first semester at IUP with no real connections or means of finding a major. While a student would be undeclared in a particular college, they would be assigned to an advisor in any department, and still lacked connection and direction. For first generation college students who had no idea what to expect in college, being undeclared at the same time was often isolating. The UC helps students make connections and provides resources so they can declare a major by the end of their fall semester sophomore year.

### College Mentors and Linked Courses

Students in the UC are assigned to a college mentor, or a professor within their college of interest. They also take a course related to that college—Pathways in [college of interest]. College mentors advise students and help them to decide if their college of interest is the right direction for them.

Linked courses connect two Liberal Studies required courses and have the same group of students in each. These courses are designed to give undeclared students a sense of community and connection when they don't yet have a departmental home.

### Other Programs Coordinated by the UC:

- **Promising Scholars:** Jeremy Risinger works with scholarship students to ensure they meet scholarship requirements, pursue opportunities available to them, and connect with the broader IUP community.
- **Student Athlete Study Lab:** Chartice Wyatt works with student athletes to keep their GPA above the required minimum.
- **Crimson Common Hours:** An event **open to all students**, Crimson Common Hours discuss all things related to college like study tips, destressing, and how to get an on-campus job.

**“Sometimes not knowing what you’re doing allows you to do the things you never knew you could do.”**

**Nell Scovell**





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## Crimson Common Hour Topics from Fall 2019:

**Hire A Hawk:** Help students navigate the online hiring system, check to see if they have Federal Work Study (indicated on MyIUP), and provide tips for the interview process.

**Studying for College:** Teach effective study skills and planner tips for improving time-management.

**Campus Resources:** Test students knowledge on available resources, then provide an overview of the support programs on campus.

**Adulting 101:** Promote financial literacy, provide ways to balance academic and personal lives, and teach basic skills (like how to fold a fitted sheet!)

**UC Field Day:** Social event for students and staff to play outdoor games and activities.

**Perfecting your #Brand:** Helps students compare their current self to their future goals while encouraging campus and community engagement.

**Preparing for Registration:** Familiarize students with how they should prepare for advising meetings and how to use Degree Works.

**Vision Boards:** Students create vision boards for their academic year goals.

**16Personalities:** Students complete an online survey and look at career options based on results

**De-Stress Fest:** Stress-reducing activities and events throughout the week. Promote self-care and good mental health for finals week.

These events  
change every  
semester and are  
open to everyone!

Dr. Michele Norwood says the model is working. College mentors and student support specialists are helping UC students select a major that is a good fit while also creating a community for them to rely on. The goal is to have students make a major decision by the end of fall semester sophomore year because having a major and home department by this time supports higher retention rates and greater overall success.

Dr. Norwood intends to expand the model with the hopes of providing "the answer people," like college mentors and support specialists, to every student on campus and encourage the grit to stay here at IUP.

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