

CHRIS BAKKUM HELPS STUDENTS WITH ADVISING, ACADEMIC HONORS

GOLDEN ADVICE

You might say Chris Bakkum would help a student in a snap. But that's only one thing the Assistant to the Dean of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse College of Liberal Studies does.

Bakkum has been a key player in getting SNAP — a computerized degree audit reporting system — up and running. Now students can get in minutes an easy-to-read one-page report that shows course selections they need to graduate in their current major or any other discipline. Gone are the days when students and advisers pored over check lists to determine courses needed to complete a degree.

But the speed of getting the complicated system working on campus didn't happen overnight. It actually happened over a number of nights.

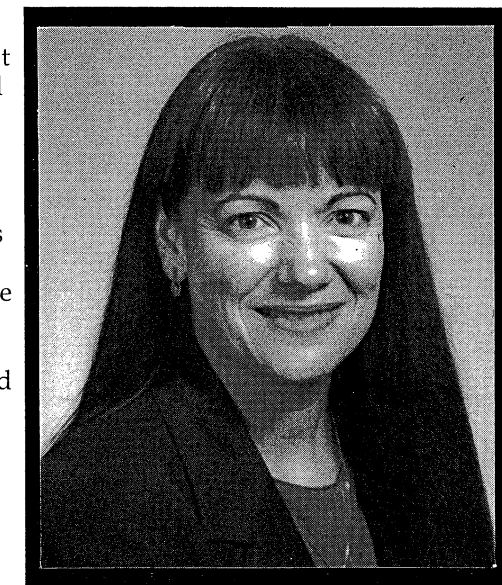
Bakkum and colleague Jan Von Ruden from the Records and Registration Office spent countless hours late into the night coding courses and requirements for majors and minors. It took them about a year before they could test the system.

Bakkum recalls taking trial SNAP reports to a class, hoping students could easily read the reports and would like them. They were a hit. The only disgruntled remarks came from students who didn't get a report because they had a major that wasn't completely coded.

Bakkum's and Von Ruden's persistence in coding the classes helped the university become a nationally recognized leader in the area of computerized degree audits. They remain active in the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) national users group, along with presenting at regional and national conferences, and consulting with other schools. They also initiated the first DARS conference in the state, now in its third year.

The Bakkum file:

- Native of Milwaukee
- B.S. UW-La Crosse 1976, Elementary Education major, Recreation minor
- Elementary School Teacher, Waukesha, Wis., 1977-1983
- M.S. UW-La Crosse 1984, College Student Personnel
- Assistant to the dean, UW-L College of Liberal Studies since 1984
- 1996 Academic Staff Excellence Award recipient



For those who know Bakkum, her extensive work with the project wasn't surprising.

"Chris is a dedicated and involved staff member, and always works hard on behalf of

students, academic staff and the university," explains Diane Schumacher, university registrar.

The extensive work with SNAP is only one reason Bakkum has been awarded the 1996 Academic Staff Excellence Award. There are many others.

One is Bakkum's work with the Golden Key National Honor Society chapter on campus that now involves more than 250 juniors and seniors. Given the assignment to establish the campus chapter in 1992, Bakkum had the chapter running the following year. The chapter has received national recognition each year since, and was selected to hold the regional conference last spring.

Bakkum continues to advise the group with professor Cecilia Manrique.

Along with her regular job duties, Bakkum has served on campus governance. She has held officer positions on the Academic Staff Council Executive Committee, and has served on numerous campus-wide committees.

Ironically, Bakkum's work with getting advising on-line has reduced her contact with students, which remains her first love. She looks forward to meeting with all juniors in the college when they are encouraged to verify academic reports. "That's the kind of student contact I enjoy," she notes.

Her enthusiasm to help students is contagious. "Chris helps to remind me of the importance of people as individuals, in a productive and healthy educational environment," says Sandra Flake, dean of the College of Liberal Studies.

The direct student contact attracted Bakkum to a student advising position with the college in 1984 while taking graduate courses. A 1976 graduate of UW-L with a bachelor's in elementary education, Bakkum taught in Waukesha before beginning graduate studies full time in 1983. Upon receiving a master's in college student personnel, she accepted a full-time position with the college.

Bakkum has worked in the College of Liberal Studies since, except for a one-year leave to work in the vice chancellor's office. She's currently working on a doctorate in educational administration at UW-Madison. She hopes to eventually teach in the college student personnel program, and become more involved in administration. She hopes those goals allow her to remain on campus.

"It's hard for me to think about leaving UW-L," says Bakkum, "It's been a very happy place for me."