

# TAKING CARE OF STUDENTS' WELL-BEING

## The way to support studies in chemistry

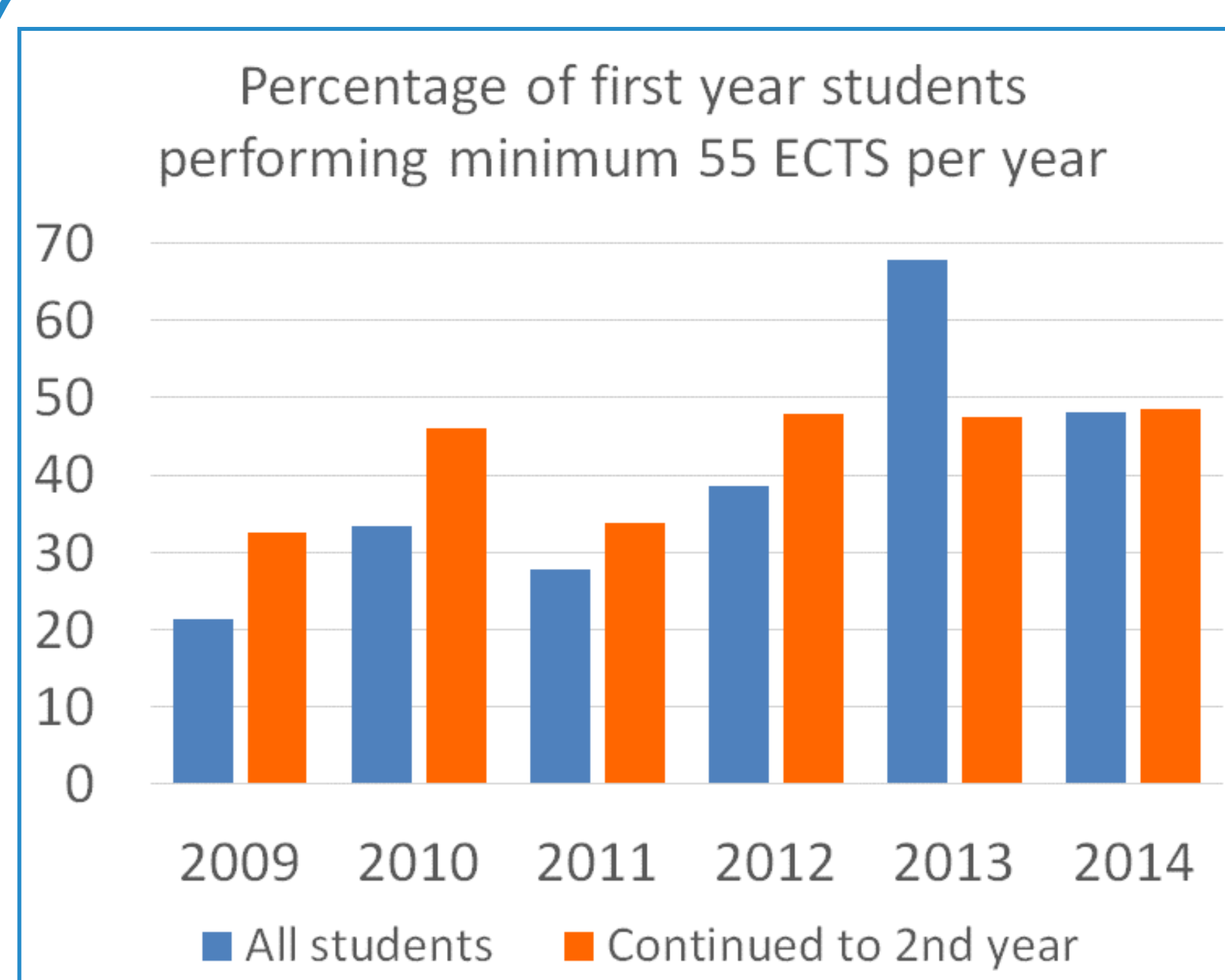
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The Department of Chemistry at the University of Jyväskylä supports first year students by guiding them both in study and well-being issues. The Student Life- and Goodie- operating model developed at the University of Jyväskylä is applied and combined with study counselling, teaching and studying, and other department activities in order to offer easily accessible support in any issues a student might face.

Starting from the first day of the orientation course, students are offered support from several co-operating levels: Student advisors, amanuensis, teachers, student association and student tutors, other students and staff.

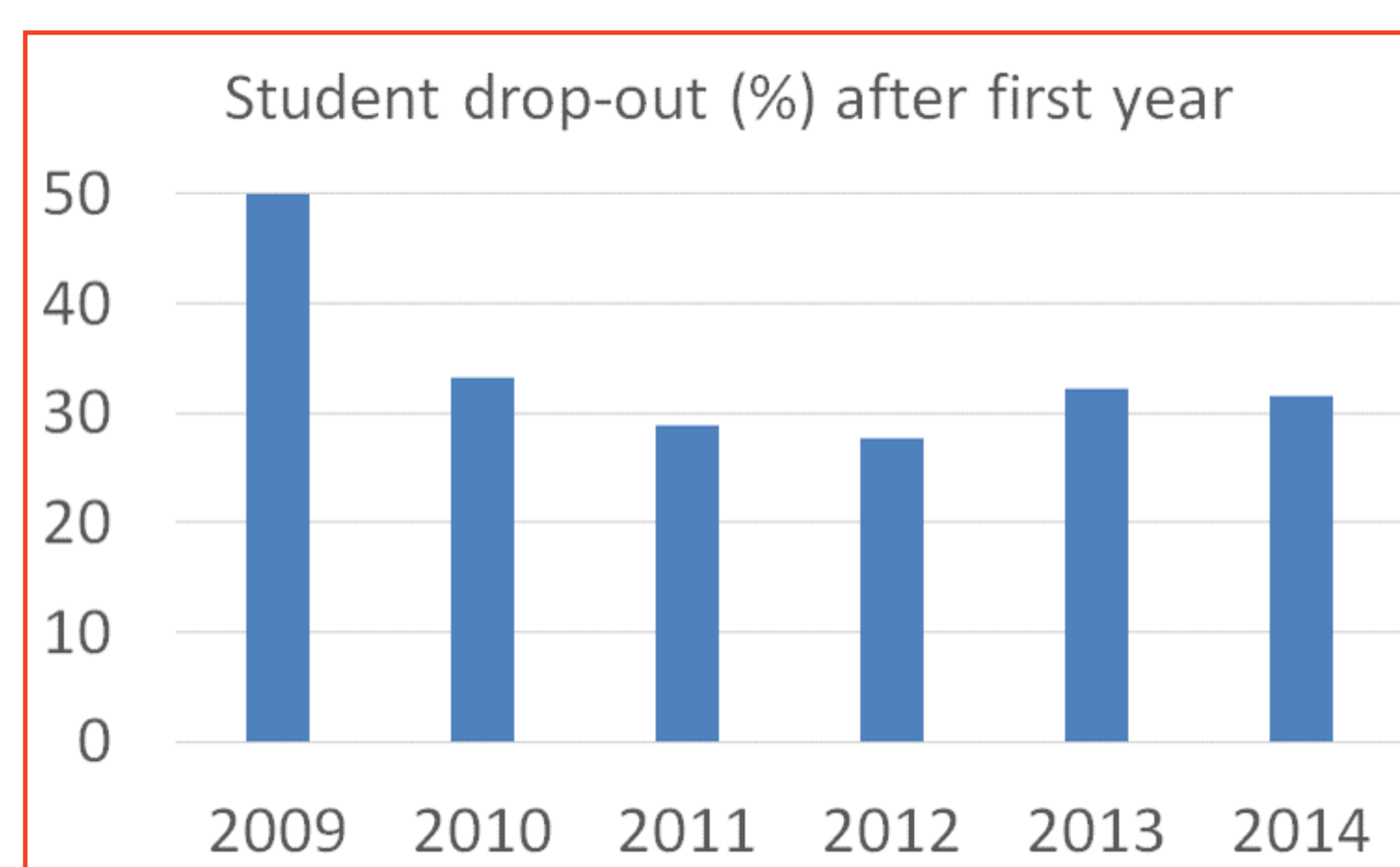
The most important, connecting operator in our model is personal student advisors. All the advisors are trained as "Goodies", who offer support and advise in especially well-being issues. The Student advisor—Goodies also teach in chemistry courses throughout the Bachelor's degree and thus become familiar with students from their first day onwards. Thus, this model offers a close contact person who is familiar and easily approached by the students.

### Effects on student retention and study success



The new, holistic study counselling model, started in 2011, seems to have a positive effect on both study success (measured with ECTS credits) and retention of chemistry students. The number of students dropping out after first year has decreased from about 50% to 30%, and the percentage of students performing minimum 55 ECTS is growing (26 % increase from 2009).

Preliminary results from an ongoing Master's thesis study\* also suggest that first year JY chemistry students are very happy and satisfied with the atmosphere, teaching, study counselling and study environment at the Department of Chemistry.



### References and links

- . EFYE 2013 Show and tell –presentation "Welcoming the first year chemistry students" by Tiina Kiviniemi
- . EFYE 2015 Show and tell –presentation "Meaningful student counselling enhances study experience in Chemistry" by Piia Valto
- . P. Valto & J. Lundell, Yliopistopedagogiikka (2015) 22(1) 27-31
- . \*Master's thesis study by Soila Tulonen, JY, to be published summer 2016

[www.jyu.fi/kemia/en](http://www.jyu.fi/kemia/en)  
[www.jyu.fi/studentlife/en/goodie](http://www.jyu.fi/studentlife/en/goodie)

# UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ





Personal student advisors are part of the teaching staff with permanent positions, and each advisor has also done some pedagogical studies, student counselling courses and Goodie training.

The students will meet their advisors regularly both in chemistry courses and also during their "Personal study plan"-course, which starts from the first month of studies and continues until the Bachelor's degree is reached. The student's first contact with her personal advisor is arranged during the first week of studies. Currently, all student advisors teach in both basic and subject level chemistry courses, especially in laboratory courses where personal contact is easily achieved.

The Goodie well-being advisors are University staff members, who have been trained to support the well-being of students. Students can come with any issue or problem and discussions are always kept confidential. If needed, they will guide the student further to find a solution for her situation. Or they can just listen, if student only needs someone to talk to.

Goodie training includes learning about Goodie operating model, and training for individual and group counselling by professionals. After training, Goodies are offered support in many forms, for example peer support, Student Life contact person, comprehensive package of background material, work-counselling groups, and consultation with Psychologist of Finnish Student Health Service, Department of Psychology and Department of Special Education.

Amanuensis and Departmental Secretary of Educational affairs offer support for students in administrative issues. In addition, amanuensis has also Goodie training so she can help with student well-being issues too.

The administrative personnel is actively taking part in department's student activities such as orientation course and game evenings, and also inform students on important current issues via e-mail lists and information lectures (for example student exchange, changes in curriculum or courses, practical issues on Bachelor's thesis etc.).

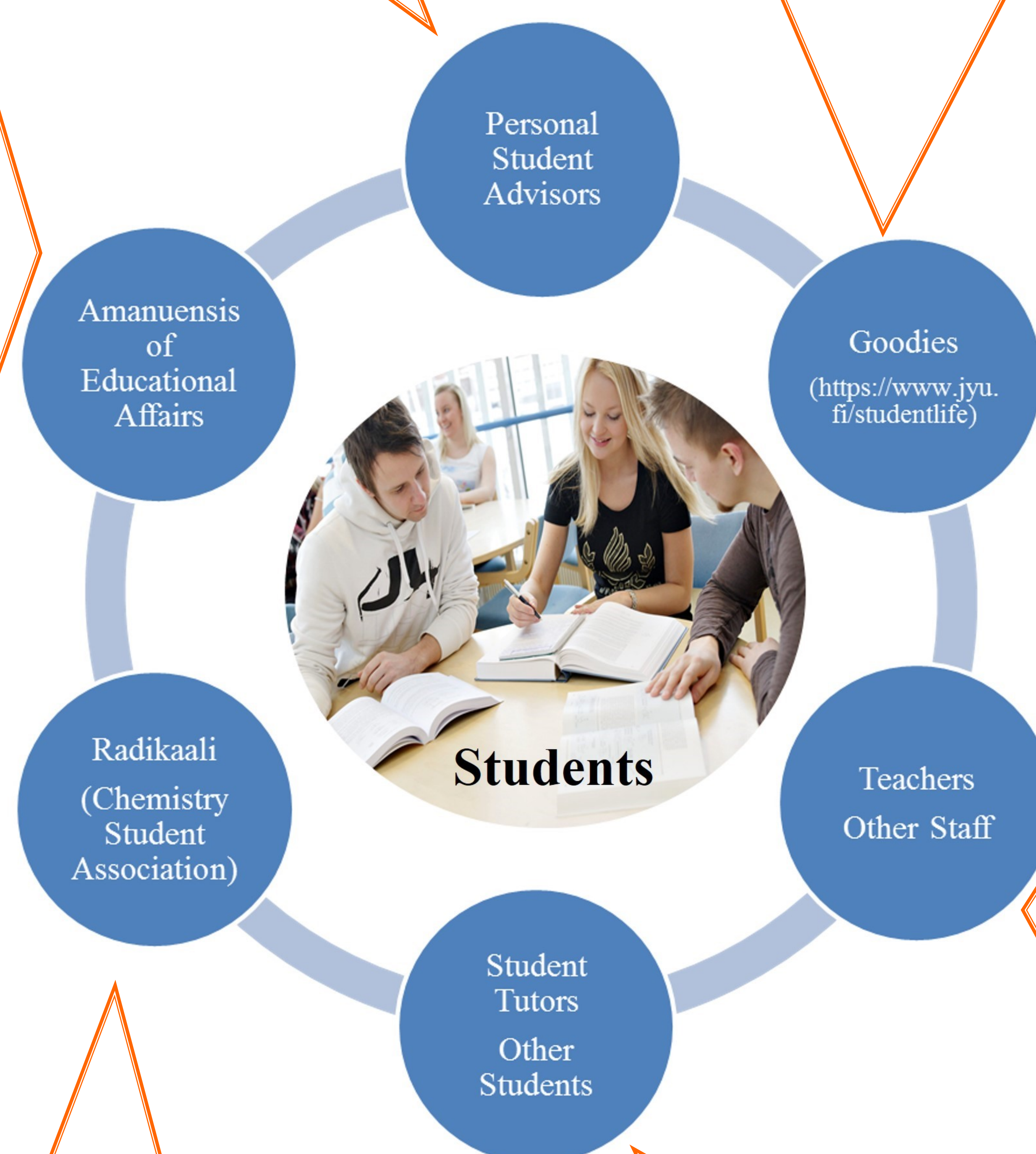
They also work together with student advisors to ensure everyone has the latest information on curricula and administrative issues concerning students.

The chemistry student association Radikaali plays an important role in the chemistry community. The association organizes various different student activities both alone and together with Department, adding to free time activities where the students can meet their peers.

In addition, the student association takes part in planning and executing the first year introductory course, and represents the students' voice in developing Department's teaching, evaluation and other practices.

Student tutors are working with a small group of first year students each, and these form the first peer contacts for our students. Department of Chemistry offers additional training for student tutors, and in practise, student tutors are part of the teaching staff in the orientation course.

The Department also supports student activities that bring students together with new student contacts, including studying and study planning in small groups, game evenings with the staff and other more or less formal events.



Teachers and other staff in Department of Chemistry are also an important part of the chemistry community. They take part in activities like arranging the first year orientation course and socializing with students for example in game evenings and yearly "Chemistry competition" organized together with student association Radikaali.

Teachers and other staff are also well aware of the student advisors' and Goodies' work so they can help students in contacting the right persons if needed.