Academic Advising: The Pivotal Point in Assisting Students to Attain Educational and Career Goals

“For one person to be able to advise or even help another, a lot must go well, a whole constellation of things must come right in order to once succeed.”

Rainer Maria Rilke
Letters to a Young Poet
(1903)

“Becoming an excellent academic advisor is a little like learning a foreign language. Our ability to use and apply vocabulary and rules of grammar lags behind our acquisition of the language itself; we gain fluency by becoming immersed in it – hearing it, speaking it, and living it. The “art of advising” – the ability to seamlessly synthesize and apply information about the student and the institution to individual student situations in ways that help students grow and make the most out of their college experience – is in large part learned in the advising chair. Advisors develop excellence over time, student by student, through an experiential synthesis of the conceptual, informational, and relational components of advising.”

Folsom, Joslin, and Yoder
University of Iowa
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An Introduction to the Academic Advising Resource Document

Academic advising on many college and university campuses is often a low priority, poorly coordinated, under-resourced, and inconsistently delivered activity. Frequently performed in a perfunctory manner by persons who are not particularly well trained, evaluated, or rewarded for the responsibility; academic advising is largely ineffective in meeting either student or institutional needs.

This disappointing conclusion is based on the author’s forty years retrospection of academic advising in higher education, as well as, assisting numerous institutions through a consulting process to improve the organization and delivery of high quality advising services.

This conclusion can also be empirically documented by reviewing the findings of all ACT national surveys (1979, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1997, 2004) on academic advising. As Habley (2000) concludes:

“A recurrent theme in all ACT national surveys is that training, evaluation, and recognition/reward have been, and continue to be, the weakest links in academic advising throughout the nation. These important institutional practices in support of quality advising are at best unsystematic and at worst nonexistent.”

The above conclusions on the status of academic advising are not intended to preclude the fact that there are some exemplary advising programs as well as many effective advisors. However, even when good practices do exist they are often limited to a specific college, school, or department and are seldom consistently implemented institutionwide. For many institutions the continuing effort to improve various aspects of their advising programs is both warranted and necessary.

I wish to recognize the colleges/universities, individuals, and organizations whose ideas and materials are included in this compilation of academic advising resources. The sole purpose of the resource document is to assist advising Webinar participants to become more effective academic advisors. For those wishing to improve academic advising the best single source is the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). NACADA services, resources, and programs are outlined on their Web site. Visit http://www.nacada.ksu.edu.

The definitive guide to the academic advising issues facing colleges and universities is:

Another excellent resource specifically for faculty advisors is:


Two closing admonitions for those engaged in the continuous process of improving their delivery of academic advising services to students:

“What we think, or what we know, or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.”

John Ruskin
19th Century English Essayist and Reformer

“You don’t make a pickle by squirting vinegar on a cucumber. It has to soak awhile before you get what you want.”

Author Unknown
Definition of Academic Advising

“There are many definitions of advising, but most stress the importance of understanding individual students and their unique needs. Academic advising is often referred to as a process that involves a close student-advisor relationship. Advising is seen as an important vehicle for helping students achieve educational and personal goals through the use of campus and community resources.”

Dr. Virginia Gordon
Handbook of Academic Advising

In 1972, Terry O'Banion proposed a five-step advising model that is now generally recognized as the origin of a developmental approach to academic advising. This model recognizes that the advising process involves a set of sequential steps.

**O'Banion Developmental Advising Model**

1. Exploration and confirmation of life goals and values.
2. Exploration and confirmation of career goals.
3. Selection of a major or program of study to achieve life, career, and educational goals.
4. Selection of courses in any given term.
5. Scheduling of courses.

*O'Banion, T. “An Academic Advising Model.”
Junior College Journal, 1972, 42 (6), 62, 64, 66-69

O'Banion's model assumes a developmental approach to academic advising that involves more than course selection and scheduling. Rather, these necessary but mechanical activities must be accomplished within a broader context that needs to be discussed and developed by the advisee and the advisor. The quality of academic advising on college and university campuses could be greatly enhanced by placing more emphasis on and devoting more time to steps one and two of the O'Banion model. Academic advising needs to be redefined so that these developmental functions – exploring, integrating, and synthesizing a student's life, career, and academic goals – are central to the process.
Developmental advising is a student-centered approach that integrates the activities of career/life planning and academic advising to assist students to develop a personally relevant educational and career planning experience. However, advisors who may feel they lack the necessary background and training to engage in what they see as basically a counseling or life/career planning function may resist a developmental approach to academic advising. Developmental advising should not be confused with personal or psychological counseling: the focus of academic advising remains the student's instructional program and how the program contributes in a coherent manner to career and life goals.

Since a major goal of developmental advising should be student growth, developmental advising at the institution should include more emphasis on:

1. Assessment activities for the formation and clarification of the advisee's values, interests, abilities, and goals;
2. Activities which help students to relate self-information to career and education; and
3. Activities that "teach" decision-making skills and assist with the implementation of choices.

The term "developmental advising" suggests that the major objective is student growth, including:

- Growth in self-awareness;
- Growth in the ability to identify realistic educational and career goals, as well as a program of study to achieve them; and
- Growth in the awareness that life extends beyond the college experience.

Below is a comprehensive definition of advising:

“Developmental academic advising is defined as a systematic process based on a close student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in achieving educational, career, and personal goals throughout the utilization of the full range of institutional and community resources. It both stimulates and supports students in their quest for an enriched quality of life. Developmental advising relationships focus on identifying and accomplishing life goals, acquiring skills and attitudes that promote intellectual and personal growth, and sharing concerns for each other and the academic community. Developmental academic advising reflects the institution's mission of total student development and is most likely to be realized when the academic affairs and student affairs division collaborate in its implementation.”

Winston, Miller, Ender, Grites and Associates
Developmental Academic Advising (1984)

It is important to recognize that individual student readiness for developmental advising may vary considerably. Students are likely, at first, to view advisors in their informational role. Advisors need to help them go beyond this stage to reach the relational and developmental components of the advising function. Advisors must learn how to translate a question about course selection (an
informational question) into a question of goals – career, academic, and life goals – by exploring the implications of academic choices for career/life choices. They need to know how to ask cue questions to start the student along the developmental path.

A developmentally oriented advisor must serve a variety of roles, including facilitator of communication, coordinator of a student's educational experience, front-line interpreter of the value and benefit of higher education, caring and concerned mentor, and referral agent. The role of referral agent is particularly important, as a truly developmental approach to advising will require a cooperative and integrated effort among all constituents and program areas of the institution in order to make the best use of all resources to address the individual student's special educational and career plans.

Overall a developmental approach to advising suggests the following definition of academic advising:

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**Academic Advising: A Definition**

“Advising is a developmental process that assists students to clarify their life/career goals and to develop educational plans for realizing these goals. It is a decision-making process that assists students to realize their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchange with an advisor; it is ongoing, multi-faceted, and the responsibility of both student and advisor. The advisor serves as facilitator of communication, a coordinator of learning experiences through course and career planning and program progress review, and an agent of referral to other campus services as necessary.”

David S. Crockett
Noel-Levitz

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In summary, the purpose of the proposed advising program should be to provide guidance for students, influence their development, promote retention, build relationships within the college, and identify services that help students clarify both their career and life goals. Advising is centered around instructional services that go beyond academic interests and promote a caring attitude on the part of college personnel toward students.
Advising Goals

Basic to the development of an effective institutional advising program is determining what should be the goals of the advising process. The following goals statements have been identified with the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NACADA Advising Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Assisting students in self-understanding and self-acceptance (values clarification, understanding abilities, aptitudes, interests, and limitations). (Personal Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assisting students in their consideration of life goals by relating interests, skills, abilities, and values to careers, the world of work, and the nature and purpose of higher education. (Educational/Career Planning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Assisting students in developing an educational plan consistent with life goals and objectives (alternative courses of action, alternate career consideration, and selection of courses). (Educational/Career Planning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Assisting students in developing decision-making skills. (Personal Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Providing accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs. (General Information/Referral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Making referrals to other campus or community support services. (General Information/Referral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Assisting students in evaluation or re-evaluation of progress toward established goals and educational plans. (Educational/Career Planning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Providing student information to advisors and departments. (General Information/Referral)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Advising

1. Academic advising is a planning process that helps students to approach their education in an organized and meaningful way. Advising brings together all of the major dynamics in a student's life.

2. Advising is a process of giving students guidance, support and encouragement.

3. Academic advising is a process of teaching students how to become responsible consumers of their own education. It’s also a process that involves teaching students how to make viable academic decisions.

4. There is quite a difference between ideal advising and how students view advising.

5. Advising is about helping students become self-sufficient.

6. Informed academic advising can help students progress and grow and your campus thrive.

7. Advising is a process that involves the entire campus, from freshman orientation to career counseling to graduation.

8. Advising is a process of helping students diminish the confusion that comes with a new environment, clarify their goals and get the most out of their education.

9. Academic advising is the central process by which you can personalize the whole college experience and help make it relevant to the student.

10. Informed academic advising is guided by the notions of progress and growth. Advising is a process that helps students discover their strengths and build on them to achieve their goals.

11. The ultimate goal of academic advising is students getting the very most out of their college experience. Advising promotes excellence.

12. Effective advisors care about students and want to make a difference in their lives.

13. Good advising is interactive. Both the student and the advisor contribute.
Statement of the Concept of Academic Advising

The National Academic Advising Association is the leader within the global education community for the theory, delivery, application, and advancement of academic advising to enhance student learning and development. The following is the official statement of the National Academic Advising Association regarding the concept of academic advising.

Preamble

Academic advising, along with teaching, research, and service, is central to achieving the fundamental goals of higher education. Academic advising is an educational process that requires concern for and consideration of all the fundamental goals encompassed in higher education. Teaching students to understand the meaning of higher education, teaching students to understand the purpose of the curriculum, and fostering students’ intellectual and personal development toward academic success and lifelong learning are the particular goals of academic advising. Though it may vary from one context to another, academic advising is a multidimensional and intentional process, grounded in teaching and learning, with its own purpose, content, and specific outcomes.

The Concept of Academic Advising

Academic advising is rooted in the same fundamental purposes as higher education itself. It is an essential part of the teaching-learning paradigm advocated by higher education agencies, professional bodies, and colleges and universities. The basis of academic advising is not limited to any one theoretical perspective, but the practice is informed by a variety of theories from the fields of education, social sciences, and the humanities. The ultimate goals of academic advising are: a) to engage students in learning, b) to promote students’ academic success, c) to foster students’ personal and intellectual growth, and d) to assist students in carrying these goals into their roles as citizens and lifelong learners. Academic advising is undertaken on all college and university campuses in frameworks that are as diverse as the institutions, students, advisors, and delivery modes on campus. Regardless of the diversities among institutions and students, four components are common to all forms of academic advising.

Academic advising is a multidimensional, intentional process. The academic advising process is comprised of an integrated series of events that occur over time. This series of events is not serendipitous but is intentional in design and desired outcome. Although a single advising event may involve only one dimension, the overall process of academic advising encompasses many dimensions: educational, curricular, intellectual, career, and personal. The process requires the advisor to take into account the changing nature of student characteristics, values, and motivations, as they enter, move through, and exit the institution.

Academic advising is grounded in teaching and learning. Pedagogical skills are requisite to successful teaching and learning. Under the pedagogy of successful academic advising, practitioners must effectively use informational, relational, and conceptual skills to foster student learning and success regardless of the communication modality.

Academic advising has its own purpose and content. The syllabus for academic advising includes teaching about the goals of higher education; modes of thinking and learning; the institution’s
mission; the meaning, value, and interrelationship of the parts of the curriculum and co-
curriculum; the transferability of knowledge, values, and skills; and campus resources and
processes. Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students’ educational experiences
within the frameworks of their own aspirations, abilities, and personal lives to extend learning
beyond campus boundaries and timeframes.

Academic advising has specified outcomes for student learning. The student learning outcomes of
academic advising must be specified and guided by each institution’s mission, goals, overall
curriculum, and co-curriculum. Outcomes must also incorporate the educational, curricular,
intellectual, career, and personal dimensions of the academic advising process.

The National Academic Advising Association provides and endorses this statement of the concept
of academic advising to guide the higher education in its support of the academic advising
process.

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The Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising

Introduction

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) is an organization of professional and faculty advisors, administrators, students, and others with a primary interest in the practice of academic advising. With diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, we advise in a variety of settings and work to promote quality academic advising within our institutions.

We recognize and celebrate the contributions of all faculty, professional, para-professional, and peer advisors to our profession. We acknowledge the need for a Statement of Core Values that affirms our beliefs about the importance of education and the understanding of the power of human interaction and its impact on the individual lives and present and future society. We acknowledge the complex nature of our institutions of higher education and the role academic advising plays within them, the wide variety of settings and tasks for which academic advisors are responsible, and the diverse backgrounds and experiences of academic advisors.

The Statement of Core Values consists of a) Introduction, b) the Core Values, and c) Exposition, a descriptive section expanding on each of the Core Values. While each stands alone, the richness and full meaning of the document lies in its totality.

The Statement of Core Values provides a framework for measuring our successes and reminds us of our responsibilities to students, colleagues, institutions, society, and ourselves. Those charged with advising responsibilities are expected to reflect the values of the advising profession in their daily interactions at their institutions.

Through the Statement of Core Values, NACADA does not attempt to dictate the manner or process in which academic advising is accomplished nor does it advocate one particular advising philosophy or model over another. Instead, these are intended to be reference points for all advisors to use to assess their individual areas of professional strength, weakness, and philosophy. Furthermore, the elements of the Core Values do not carry equal weight. Advisors will find some Core Values more applicable or valuable than others. Each advisor should weigh each Core Value against his or her own values and those of the institution.

All our constituents, but especially students, deserve dependable, accurate, timely, respectful, honest, friendly, and professional responses. Through this Statement of Core Values, we communicate the expectations that others may have of us in our roles as advisors. Our responsibility to our many constituents is the foundation upon which the Core Values rest. This statement, used in conjunction with the Definition of Academic Advising, will allow us to formally validate our conduct in our diverse roles and in our relationships within the academic community.

Academic advisors work to strengthen the importance, dignity, potential, and unique nature of each individual within the academic setting. An advisors’ work is guided by their beliefs that students:

- Represent diverse ethnic, racial, domestic, and international communities; sexual orientations; ages; gender and gender identities; physical, emotional, and psychological abilities; political, religious, and educational beliefs.
• Hold their own beliefs and opinions.
• Are responsible for their own behavior and the outcomes of those behaviors.
• Can be successful based upon their individual goals and efforts.
• Have a desire to learn.
• Have learning needs that vary according to individual skills, goals, and experiences.
• Use varying and constantly changing techniques and technologies to navigate their world.

In support of these beliefs, the cooperative efforts of all those who advise should include, but not be limited to, giving accurate and timely information, communicating in modes that are useful and efficient, maintaining regular office hours, and offering various types of contact.

Advising as part of the educational process involves helping students develop self-perception and make the transition to the institution. Advisors have the responsibility to encourage, respect, and assist students in establishing their goals and objectives.

Students place a great deal of trust in their advisors. Advisors strive to honor students’ expectations of academic advising and understand its importance in their lives.

Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.

Effective advising requires a holistic board-based approach. At many institutions, a network of people is involved in the daily support and care of students. Advisors are mediators and facilitators who should use their specialized knowledge and experience effectively but recognize their limitations and make referrals to qualified persons when necessary. To connect academic advising to students’ lives, advisors need to actively seek out resources and inform students of the services available to them. Referrals to these resources provide students with opportunities for further assessment to their needs and access to appropriate programs and services. Advisors are responsible for helping students integrate information and make well-informed academic decisions.

Advisors are responsible to the institutions in which they work.

Advisors nurture collegial relationships. They abide by specific policies, procedures, and values of the department and institution for which they work. Advisors maintain clear lines of communication with those who are not directly involved in the advising process but who have responsibility and authority for decisions regarding academic advising at the institution. Advisors recognize their individual role in the success of the institution.

Advisors are responsible to higher education.

Academic advisors honor academic freedom. They are free to base their work with students on the most appropriate theories of college-student learning and development and on the optimal models of delivery for academic advising and services. Advisors advocate for students’ educational achievement at the highest attainable standard and support student goals as well as the educational mission of the institution.
Advisors are responsible to the community including the local community, state, and region in which the institution is located.

Academic advisors interpret an institution’s mission, goals, and values. They convey information and characteristics of student success to the local, state, and communities from which the institution draws its student body.

Advisors are sensitive to the values and morals of the surrounding community, sharing these and interpreting them to students. Advisors are familiar with community programs and services that may provide additional educational opportunities and resources for students. Advisors may become models for students by participating in community activities.

Advisors are responsible to their professional role as advisors and to themselves personally.

Advisors are encouraged to interact with others through participation in professional development opportunities, to develop the skills that help them establish appropriate boundaries and relationships with advisees, and to create environments that allow them to be physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy. Advisors are encouraged to maintain healthy balances in their lives, articulate personal and professional needs when appropriate and needed, and to consider their own professional growth and development to be both their own responsibility and that of the institution.

The intention of the State of Core Values is to provide the guidance many academic advisors have sought from the National Academic Association. The Statement should be reviewed periodically, relevant material added, and existing language reworded, as necessary, to bring the Statement in line with current professional practices and thinking. The National Academic Advising Association encourages institutions to adopt this Statement of Core Values, to embrace its principles, and to support the work of those who do academic advising.

Exposition

Core Value 1: Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise.

- Academic advising is part of the educational process. Academic advising has the potential to affect students’ postsecondary careers in numerous ways. Students’ learning and development as participants and contributors to their own educational experience should be enhanced by their contact with academic advisors. The opportunity to maximize student potential is just one of the possible results of academic advising.

- Through regular contact with students (using in-person appointments, mail, telephone, e-mail, and other computer-mediated systems) advisors gain meaningful insight into students’ diverse academic, social, and personal experiences and needs. Advisors use these insights to help students transition to a new academic and social community, develop sound academic and career goals, and ultimately, be successful learners.

- Recognizing and respecting that students come from a diverse set of backgrounds, comprised of their ethnic and racial heritage, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical abilities, and psychological make-up, advisors help students develop and/or reinforce their perception of self and their relationship to the future.
• Advisors introduce students to and assist them in the transition to the academic environment they have chosen by teaching them to value the learning process, put the college experience in perspective, become more responsible and accountable, set priorities and evaluate events, and be honest with themselves and others about the successes and limitations they experience.

• Advisors encourage self-reliance by helping students make informed and responsible decisions, set realistic goals, and develop thinking, learning, and life management skills to meet present and future needs.

• While attempting to guide and teach them, advisors respect students’ rights to their individual beliefs and opinions. Advisors work with students to help them understand and apply the concepts of the classroom to everyday life.

• Advisors help students establish goals and objectives for themselves and encourage them to be responsible for their own success and progress.

• Advisors work to understand and modify barriers to student progress, identify ineffective and inefficient policies and procedures, and work to affect change. When the needs of students and institutions are in conflict, advisors seek a resolution that is in the best interest of both parties, and they inform students about appropriate grievance procedures in cases where the student finds the resolution unsatisfactory.

• Advisors recognize the changing nature of the college and university environment and the diverse student body. They especially acknowledge the changing communication technologies used by students and the resulting new learning environments, the pressures on students to balance course loads, financial and family issues, and demands on students from others.

• Advisors are knowledgeable about and sensitive to national, regional, local, and institutional policies and procedures, particularly those governing matters of harassment, use of technology, personal relationships with students, the privacy of student information, and equal opportunity.

• Advisors who are also faculty members are encouraged to make every attempt to help students explore academic opportunities outside the advisors’ respective discipline(s).

• Advisors respect the rights of students to confidentiality regarding their personal information. Advisors respect the institution’s interpretation of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act and share information with others about students and their programs only when both the student and advisor believe it is relevant and will result in increased information or assistance, assessment, and provision of appropriate services to the student.

• Advisors gain access to and use electronic and other information about students only when it is relevant to the advising process. Advisors enter or change information on students’ records only when legitimately authorized to do so.

• Advisors document advising contacts adequately to aid subsequent advising interactions.
Core Value 2: Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.

- Academic advisors need to develop critical relationships with others who assist students in such diverse areas as admissions, orientation, financial aid, housing, health services, athletics, course and major selection, satisfaction of academic requirements, special physical and educational needs (including disability services, tutoring, psychological counseling, international study, career development, transfer of credits to other institutions, co-curricular programs, and graduation clearance).

- Because of the nature of academic advising, advisors often develop a broad understanding of an institution and a detailed understanding of the resources available to students. Advisors can therefore play an integral, interpretive role with students regarding their interaction with faculty members, administrators, and fellow students.

- Advisors can also facilitate greater understanding on the part of the institutions’ administration with regard to students’ needs.

- Programs that use or involve students in the advising process (such as peer advisors or graduate assistants) must ensure that these advisors are supervised, adequately trained, and monitored for adherence to the same policies and practices required of the professional staff and faculty advisors in that unit/institution.

Core Value 3: Advisors are responsible to the institution in which they work.

- Advisors work in many types of institutions of higher education and abide by the specific policies, procedures, and values of the department and institution for which they work. Where injustices might interfere with students’ learning and development, advisors advocate for change on the students’ behalf with the institution’s administration, faculty, and staff.

- Advisors keep administrators who are not directly involved in the advising process informed and aware of the importance of academic advising in student’s lives. They articulate the need for administrative support of advising and related activities.

- Advisors increase their collective professional strength by constructively and respectfully sharing their varied philosophies and techniques with colleagues.

- Advisors respect the opinions of their colleagues; remain neutral when students make comments, ask questions, or express opinions about other faculty or staff; and are nonjudgmental about academic programs.

Core Value 4: Advisors are responsible to higher education.

- Advisors accept education as a means to introduce students to the world of ideas, and they promote an environment of academic freedom. Advisors strive to establish a partnership between themselves and students as they guide students through their academic programs. Based on theories of college-student learning and development and the delivery models available at the institution, advisors assist students in using their learning. Advisors help students understand that their learning can be used for day-to-day application, including exploration, trial and error, challenge, and decision making.
• Advisors advocate for students’ educational achievement at the highest attainable standard and support student goals as well as the educational mission of the institution.

• Advisors advocate for the creation, enhancement, and strengthening of programs and services through which students’ academic needs are recognized and supported.

Core Value 5: Advisors are responsible to the community including the local community, state, and region in which the institution is located.

• Acknowledging that students at postsecondary institutions may be motivated by more than a goal to be college educated, many institutions integrate classroom learning with community and study abroad experiences as well as other programs that bridge the gap between the academy and the local and global communities in which they will interact upon graduation. Where such programs exist, advisors interpret for students the relationship between the institution of higher learning and the local, regional, national, and international communities.

• Advisors advocate for students wishing to include study abroad and/or community service learning in their co-curricular college experience and make appropriate referrals.

• Advisors understand that intricacies of transferring between institutions and make appropriate referrals that help students achieve their goals.

Core Value 6: Advisors are responsible to their professional role as advisors and to themselves personally.

• To keep advising skills honed and interest high, advisors are encouraged to use the Core Values to assess areas of individual professional strengths and weaknesses and identify appropriate workshops, classes, literature, and groups to continue their own study of areas of specific advising interest. Opportunities for professional development may be obtained both within and outside the institution. Advisors are encouraged to seek additional opportunities to learn about the various ethnic communities, racial groups, religions, sexual preferences, physical abilities and disabilities, gender issues, ages, and psychological disorders in the general student population.

• Academic advising lends itself to research. Advisors may engage in research related to advising and are encouraged to engage in research related to their own particular training and disciplinary backgrounds. Each research agenda must honor the institution’s safeguards for privacy and humane treatment or participants.

• Advisors understand the demands on themselves that emerge from the nature of working with students. Commitments include but are not limited to teaching, researching, writing, and serving as administrators and committee members. Advisors acquire skills for taking care of themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They learn how to detach from students’ problems while actively listening and providing sensitive, timely responses. They establish and maintain appropriate boundaries. They nurture others and need to be nurtured in return. They seek support for themselves both within and outside the institution.

The intention of the Statement of Core Values is to provide the guidance many academic advisors have sought from the National Academic Advising Association. The statement should be reviewed periodically, relevant material added, and existing language reworded, as necessary, to
bring the statement in line with current professional practices and thinking. The National Academic Advising Association encourages institutions to adopt this Statement of Core Values, to embrace its principles, and to support the work of those who do academic advising.

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Academic Advising for Student Success and Retention: An Advising Perspective

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William G. McGuire, Ph.D. Associate Director for Student Support Services and Retention, Pittsburg State University

Participant Note: The following advising perspective, written by two of the program’s authors, discusses the strengths-based approach to advising and the role this approach can have in promoting student retention and student success.

The focus of Academic Advising for Student Success and Retention is on students, and on advising students in ways that promote the development of talent within students. At the same time, we hope that the program will also add to the development of faculty members and the professional and paraprofessional advisors who participate.

The ultimate aim is for college students to gain maximum benefits from the college experience and to come alive to the possibilities of lifelong learning, growth and development. And we are convinced that for this to become a reality, students must experience advising of the highest order – advising based on standards of excellence – advising that is driven by a commitment to excellence and that defines excellence in terms of the development of the talents of its students.

For the faculty member, the hallmarks of excellence and desired change might occur along such dimensions as teaching, advising, mentoring, and scholarly ability and productivity. In a similar manner, all those who have responsibilities for the educational mission of the institution would be expected to experience growth and development as a result of being in the educational institution. Therefore, excellence in a framework of the development of human talents would include an emphasis on the intellectual and personal development of all advisors, counselors, learning specialists and student service professionals.

Can you imagine anything more exciting than working in an educational institution that is truly devoted and committed to the development of human talent? Can you imagine a better institution of higher education than one that is truly devoted and committed to the intellectual and personal development of its students; its faculty and its professional staff? Can you imagine how alive, how vibrant and how exciting it would be to work at an institution that truly defined itself; truly strove for excellence in terms of fully developing its students, its faculty and its staff? Would such an institution have difficulty recruiting students, faculty and staff? Would such an institution have drop-out and attrition problems?

- Who wouldn’t want to be at an institution that was alive with growing and developing people?
- Who wouldn’t want to attend an institution that was helping you discover your talents and abilities, and then encouraging you to develop those talents fully?
- Who wouldn’t want to persist and become fully involved at an institution where you were becoming more alive intellectually and personally as you developed your talents?
• Who wouldn’t want to achieve at an institution that was actively helping you discover new
talents and abilities and helping you grow toward your fullest capacity?

What do you suppose might happen over the course of the lives of students who experienced an
institution that really helped them fully develop intellectually and personally? Don't you imagine
that such alumni would become fully functioning, high achieving, healthy professionals? Would
such an institution have much difficulty generating donations, gifts and endowments from its
alumni? Alumni would likely be very generous because they would know that their alma mater
was devoted to talent development and because they would have experienced the benefits of such
an institution.

A Strengths-Based, Talent Development Approach to Advising

A strengths-based, talent-development approach to academic advising:
• Explicitly attempts to promote excellence – specifically the academic achievement,
persistence and maximum development of students.
• Uses student strengths and talents as the basis for educational planning and excelling.
• Recognizes that student motivation is the single most important factor determining
achievement, persistence and intellectual as well as personal development; thus student
motivation must be central to advising.
• Recognizes that excellence only occurs when individuals capitalize on their strengths and
talents, and invest the time and energy needed to excel.
• Sets forth an organized and proactive approach to advising based on the strengths-based,
talent-development theme.
• Provides specific strategies and interview methods designed to promote student achievement,
persistence and maximum development (i.e., excellence) that advisors can use in their
advising sessions.
• Provides specific activities and exercises that advisors can use to reinforce advising sessions
and help students prepare for subsequent sessions.

Some Premises of the Program

Excellence is a central value in all of higher education:
• Colleges and universities want to be known and recognized for their excellence.
• Excellence is a core value of every faculty member – every person in the academic
community.
• Maintaining excellence defines the credibility, status and prestige of colleges and universities.
• Academic Advising for Student Success and Retention emphasizes the educational mission of
a college or university as it defines excellence in terms of student learning, growth and
development.
Rationale for the Strengths-Based, Talent-Development Approach

Excellence – as both (a) the process of excelling to higher levels of achievement, and (b) performing at the highest levels – is most likely to occur when individuals:

- Capitalize on their strengths;
- Fully utilize their talents and abilities; and
- Invest the time and energy necessary to achieve.

Excellence, while based on strengths and talents, is dependent upon the motivation to invest the time and energy needed to achieve. Individuals are more likely to be motivated, remain motivated and thus invest the time and energy necessary to achieve if they are utilizing and working to develop their strengths, talents and abilities. Conversely, individuals who are forced to use, work on, and strive to overcome their weaknesses, deficiencies and lack of talent, will likely become discouraged, demoralized and suffer a lack of motivation that will reduce the probability of achieving, persisting and investing the time and energy needed for excellence.

Intents and Themes of the Strengths-Based, Talent-Development Approach

- To increase student awareness of strengths, talents and abilities;
- To encourage students to develop their strengths, talents and abilities to the maximum extent;
- To focus on building and development strengths, talents and abilities first in order to build and sustain motivation, and build confidence/efficacy to achieve;
- To help students believe they can reach levels of excellence as a direct extension of developing their strengths and talents;
- To help students address areas where they need to be successful by applying their strengths, talents and abilities;
- To facilitate student adjustments and adaptations by applying their strengths and talents where changes need to be made; and
- To facilitate career planning that extends from and fully utilizes and allows further development of strengths, talents and abilities.

What Are Strengths?

Strengths are the attributes that enable a person to do specific things well. These include:

- **Skills** – Specific thinking and behavior patterns that increase effectiveness and efficiency and improve problem solving.
- **Abilities** – Attributes that were developed from experience and enable a person to efficiently learn and complete certain tasks.
- **Gifts** – Seemingly natural inclinations and capabilities to do certain things very well.
- **Beliefs** – Thought patterns that enable a person to be effective and successful.
• **Habits** – Those recurring behaviors and thought patterns that ensure growth, development and achievement.

• **Knowledge** – The accumulated information, insights and understandings that come from previous learning experiences and that form the basis for future learning.

• **Curiosity** – The seemingly natural instinct to ask questions and desire answers to certain questions – the innate motivation to learn, know and understand.

In essence, a person’s strengths are the unique combination of attributes that enable a person to do certain things at levels of excellence! The strengths-based talent-development approach advocates that attention and effort be directed toward strengths and to the full development of those strengths. Full development of strengths is the most effective and efficient means of promoting achievement.

The Uniquely Important Role of Advising in Promoting Excellence

Advising provides a unique opportunity:

• To help students form accurate perceptions of the college experience, to correct misperceptions leading to adjustment problems and form accurate perceptions about excellence.

• To help personalize the college experience and help students become personally connected in the college environment.

• To help students experience and learn from an “advanced learner/scholar” about the personal aspects of what excites him or her to learn and pursue excellence. Advisors and students can also discuss how that pursuit of excellence has emerged and has changed during a professional career. In this process, students can learn the importance of taking their interests seriously and trusting the validity of their experiences.

Advising is thought of in terms of sets of activities and a process that could occur in a variety of programs and services. It is unlikely that an academic advisor could do all of what is proposed in the program. Academic Advising for Student Success and Retention, and some components may not be appropriate at some colleges and universities.

When we use the term “advising,” we are talking about a mode of interacting and intervening in the lives of students. Some of these “advising” interventions could occur in orientation programs, pre-registration or registration conferences, summer instructional programs, traditional academic advising interviews, college success/orientation courses and/or career/life planning workshops.

Advisors and the Strengths-Based, Talent-Development Approach

The same approaches that lead to success for students produce similar outcomes for advisors, namely that fully utilizing and capitalizing on strengths and talents will lead to excellence and maximize effectiveness.

While institutions differ in terms of who performs advising services – staff, faculty, graduate students and/or undergraduate students – one thing is clear: they are all advanced learners in one
way or another. It is this fact, this strength, and this talent we want to encourage advisors to use. As advanced learners, advisors at every level have developed a talent for asking informed questions and learning in response to their inquiries. Asking informed, relevant and timely questions is the most important skill and ability any advisor can develop.

This program attempts to organize advising and structure advising interactions into groups of questions that address various aspects of the three major issues advisors typically confront:

- Course selection
- Adjusting to demands/requirements of college
- Choosing a career

The second most important skill advisors need to use this approach is to listen carefully and reflect back (or mirror) what they hear from students. This simple process is profound in helping students become clearer, more focused, and less confused. Listening and reflecting is essential in all advising sessions that involve planning, decision-making and/or problem solving.

The third most important skill advisors need in this approach is the ability to help students identify appropriate and relevant opportunities, options, resources and services. We anticipate that utilizing this skill will involve advisors sharing their knowledge and experience and/or making timely referrals.

There are four overarching qualities that make advisors particularly effective:

- Caring and expressing compassion toward students
- Encouraging students by reminding them of their strengths and success patterns
- Sharing with students experiences or reactions that are similar to those experienced by students
- Expressing confidence in students and affirming a personal belief in what they can do

The Advisor’s Role in the Strengths-Based, Talent-Development Approach

There are significant differences between the roles of a traditional advisor and the roles of an advisor who adopts the strengths-based, talent-development approach. The biggest role difference emanates from a strengths-based advisor’s attempts to discover and develop a student’s strengths/talents as opposed to identifying and remediating the student’s deficiencies and/or weaknesses.

The specific roles of a strengths-based, talent-development advisor are as follows:

- **Assessing strengths.** This role is demanding in that it requires an understanding of: (1) which strengths are needed for achievement in specific courses; and (2) which strengths are needed to persist and gain maximum benefits from the college experience. In addition, the strengths-based advisor must have interviewing skills and an ability to administer and interpret inventories designed to identify strengths, talents, and abilities. In reality, most assessments will be informal interviews rather than standardized tests. The key to the strengths assessment process is an advisor who actively seeks to know and understand students as persons and who
agrees with the idea that achievement will result most effectively from identifying and building upon a student’s strengths.

- **Mirroring strengths and increasing awareness of strengths.** This is the most important role of a strengths-based advisor. It demands outstanding interpersonal skills, because strengths must be reflected in a way that raises the student’s awareness of his or her strengths, talents and abilities. Students must come to see, accept, and appreciate their strengths in order to increase their motivation, confidence, and efficacy, and thereby increase their achievement.

- **Orchestrating opportunities to build strengths.** The strengths-based advisor is determined to build a pattern of achievement within students by first having them build and develop their strengths. But this requires getting students into appropriate courses, services, clubs, organizations, and recreational activities. Like an orchestra conductor, the strengths-based advisor tries to pull together services and opportunities so that students can use, build and expand their strengths to their maximum capacity.

- **Affirming and celebrating progress.** In some ways, the strengths-based advisor is like a detective and investigator, but the focus is on the positive. Instead of trying to “catch” someone doing something wrong, this approach tries to “catch” students doing things right and making it possible for them to excel, gain confidence and develop their strengths. As strengths are discovered, as progress (rather than perfection) is accomplished, as students experience themselves “soaring with their strengths, the strengths-based advisor affirms and celebrates achievement.

As Donald Clifton and Paula Nelson state in their book, *Soar With Your Strengths* (1992, New York: Delacorte Press), strengths and talents develop best within the context of a supportive relationship. If an advisor makes use of the four attributes listed above, there is little doubt that students will experience a supportive relationship.
Advisor Role and Responsibility

Advisors have the following responsibilities:

- Help students clarify and develop realistic educational career plans.
- Assist students in planning a program consistent with their abilities and interests.
- Monitor progress toward educational/career goals.
- Discuss and reinforce linkages and relationships between instructional program and occupation/career.
- Interpret and provide rationale for instructional policies, procedures, and requirements.
- Approve all designated educational transactions (e.g., schedule, drops and adds, withdrawals, change of major, waivers, graduation requirements).
- Maintain an advising file for each advisee.
- Refer students when academic, attitudinal, attendance, or other personal problems require intervention by other professionals.
- Inform students of the nature of the advisor/advisee relationship.
- Request reassignment of advisee to another advisor if necessary.
- Assist advisees in identifying career opportunities.
- Develop a caring relationship with advisees.
- Inform students of special services available to them for remediation, academic assistance, and other needs.

Advisee Responsibilities

Advisees have the following responsibilities:

- Clarify their personal values, abilities, interests, and goals.
- Contact and make an appointment with the advisor when required or when in need of assistance. If the student finds it impossible to keep the appointment, the student will notify the advisor.
- Become knowledgeable and adhere to institutional policies, procedures, and requirements.
- Prepare for advising sessions and bring appropriate resources or materials.
- Follow through on actions identified during each advising session.
- Evaluate the advising system, when requested, in order to strengthen the advising process.
- Request reassignment of a different advisor if necessary.
- Accept final responsibility for all decisions.

David S. Crockett
### How You and Your Faculty Advisor Should Work Together

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should</th>
<th>Your advisor should</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact and keep in touch with your advisor</td>
<td>Keep office hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make and keep appointments or call if it’s necessary to change or cancel an appointment</td>
<td>Keep appointments or call if it is necessary to change or cancel an appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make and keep appointments or call if it’s necessary to change or cancel an appointment</td>
<td>Provide accurate and specific information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come with specific questions in mind</td>
<td>Have on hand resource material (catalogues, advisor handbook, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come with necessary materials (course offerings lists, drop/add, etc.)</td>
<td>Ask about other sources of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be open concerning school work, study habits, academic progress, etc.</td>
<td>Refer you to other sources of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a schedule for appropriate selection of courses</td>
<td>Listen to you and help you solve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check your schedule for appropriate selection of courses</td>
<td>Suggest options concerning careers, choice of majors and selection of courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make decisions concerning careers, choice of majors and selection of courses</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Lynchburg College
Limitations on Advising Responsibilities

Advisors Should Be Aware Of Limitations On Their Responsibilities

1. An advisor cannot make decisions for an advisee, but he can be a sympathetic listener and even offer various alternatives for the student to consider.

2. An advisor cannot increase the native ability of his advisee, but he can encourage the maximum use of that ability.

3. An advisor cannot reduce the academic or employment load of a floundering student, but he can make recommendations to the appropriate office for such adjustments if it appears desirable.

4. An advisor should not in any way criticize a fellow faculty member to a student, but he can make a friendly approach to any instructor who is involved in the student’s problem.

5. An advisor cannot be a good counselor and betray a student’s confidence on matters of a confidential nature, but this should not necessarily preclude exchange of helpful information between advisor and instructor or the deans. This exchange should be conducted in a professional and discreet manner.

6. An advisor should not attempt to handle cases of emotional disturbances which fall outside the behavioral pattern of students adjudged reasonably normal. When complex problems arise concerning financial aid, mental or physical health, or personal-social counseling, faculty should refer students to professional personnel through the dean of students’ office.

Millikin University
Characteristics of Effective Advisors

Description of Advisor Qualities

**Approachable:** Research has shown that a major contribution to student satisfaction and persistence is having a contact person to associate with the educational experience. The success of the relationship between the advisor and the student is directly connected to the friendliness of the advisor. Establishing a level of comfort goes a long way toward promoting student openness and willingness to share problems and concerns.

**Available:** Directly related to being approachable is being available: having consistent and convenient office hours will establish a continuity that contributes to student comfort. Office location and identification allow for the development of confidence on the part of both advisor and the student.

**Patient:** The collegiate environment can be a threatening and frustrating experience for new students. Many times students are just as concerned with phrasing questions as they are with getting answers. Taking the time to help students understand their own questions can prevent having to cover the same ground again.

**Knowledgeable:** An advisor who knows the policies and procedures is a valuable asset to the student. The ability to share the climate of the college, resources, and a working understanding of processes increases advisor confidence and adds to student satisfaction. Because changes occur on an ongoing basis, continued contact with counselors and other key personnel is essential.

**Pro-active:** If a student doesn't seek out the advisor, then it is necessary for the advisor to seek out the student. Advisors provide students with information, support, and action. Defining the advisor's function with each student early in the relationship can prevent a number of conflicts.

**Communicative:** Students seek out their advisor, first and foremost, for information. How that information is given can be critical. Speak in language that is clear and simple. Begin by listening carefully to what the student identifies as needs. Be certain it is heard correctly by repeating it back to the student. Address the question. Ask the student if he/she is clear about the answer. This may seem cumbersome, but it can prevent misunderstanding and errors which can delay the student through the process.

**Detail Oriented:** Keeping accurate records can be simplified through use of proper forms. Update files as soon after contact as possible. Students have access to their files, so the information should be pertinent to their progress. An error in record keeping can impact greatly on a student's career goal timelines. All suggestions to the student should be noted, as well as the student's final choice. Confidentiality is sometimes more difficult than it appears: advisors are bound by the rules and regulations which govern the campus. By providing a clear understanding of the data privacy laws early in the advisor/student relationship, the student will have clear and realistic expectations.

**Accepting:** Students come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. They have strengths and weaknesses. There are many things which must be done and a variety of ways to do each: the mechanics may be spelled out, but each student is unique. Working with and for the student must remain the basic objective. Approaching each situation with understanding that there may be a variety of solutions will prove helpful and facilitate proper referrals.
## Reminders for Effective Advising

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Care about students as people by showing empathy, understanding, and respect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Establish a warm, genuine, and open relationship.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Be a good listener.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Establish rapport by remembering personal information about students.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Be available, keep office hours and appointments.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Provide accurate information.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>When in doubt, refer to catalog, advisor's handbook, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Know how and when to make referrals, and be familiar with referral sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Do not refer too hastily; on the other hand, do not attempt to handle situations for which you are not qualified or comfortable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Have students contact referral sources in your presence, when possible.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Keep in frequent contact with students; take the initiative; don't always wait for them to come to you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Do not make decisions for students; help them make their own decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Focus on students' strengths and potentials rather than limitations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Monitor students’ progress toward educational goals.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Determine reasons for poor academic performance and direct students to appropriate support services.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Be realistic and honest with students.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Use all available information sources.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Clearly outline students' responsibilities.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Follow through on commitments made to students.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Encourage students to consider and develop career alternatives, when appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Keep an anecdotal record of significant conversations for future reference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Evaluate the effectiveness of your advising.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Do not be critical of other faculty or staff to students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Be knowledgeable about career opportunities and the job outlook for various majors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Encourage students to talk by asking open-ended questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Do not betray confidential information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Categorize students' questions; are they seeking action, information, or involvement, and understanding?</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Be yourself and encourage students to be themselves.</td>
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</table>
## Advisor Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have regularly scheduled office hours for advisees to meet with me throughout the semester.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I have special office hours for advisees during registration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. When I schedule office hours for advising, I stay in my office in case students drop in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I publicize my office hours for advising.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I spend as much time with my advisees as they want.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I take the initiative to have my advisees meet with me.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I keep up-to-date course schedules in my office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I keep up-to-date catalogues in my office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I know the dates for deadlines such as pre-registration, drop/add, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I am aware of the course offerings of my department each semester.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I keep informed about the current and/or future career possibilities for those with a bachelor's degree in my field.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I am knowledgeable about resources and services on campus (and keep current information about them in my office) that can fill the gaps when I cannot help a student completely with a problem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I know my advisees’ first names.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. I explain to my advisees in what ways I can service them as an advisor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I have a file of names and addresses of my advisees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. I check my advisee’s name just prior to our meeting so that I will remember it during the interview.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. I thoroughly explain to my new advisees the college requirements and requirements for the major chosen by the advisee.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helping</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. I keep a record of my appointment dates with each advisee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. When I find new information which might be helpful to an advisee, I take the initiative to pass it along to him.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. If I know of a resource that could be potentially helpful to an advisee, I offer to help contact that resource (personally, by letter, phone call, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. When a goal an advisee has set is unrealistic or impossible in my opinion, I explore this with the advisee.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I want to communicate to my advisees that I care about them as people.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. When it comes to my attention, and whenever possible, I try to help my advisees cut university red tape.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. When I tell an advisee to seek advice or help from another source, I provide exact information about where the office is located, whom to ask for, etc.

25. I help my advisees with problems involving study skills or low academic performance.

26. I do not make decisions for my advisees, but place most of my emphasis on helping them make decisions for themselves

**Advisee Behavior**

27. I am interested in my advisee's life goals as well as college goals.

28. I attempt to establish a warm and open working relationship with my advisees.

29. I am able to be honest in communicating my opinions of my advisees, their goals, capabilities, etc., even if that opinion is uncomplimentary.

30. When an advisee disagrees with something I say, I try not to become defensive about it.

31. When advisees consider changing colleges, I feel that I am helping in exploring alternatives.

32. I feel helpful in trying to sort out some of the frustrations and uncertainties my advisees experience in coping with college.

33. I am able to communicate realistic perceptions of my advisee's strengths and potential problems in relation to their major and post-college plans.

34. With respect to abilities, I focus on my advisees' potentialities rather than their limitations.

**Satisfaction with Advisees**

35. With respect to motivation, my advisees are active and striving rather than passive and in need of prodding.

36. With respect to maturity, my advisees are growing, responsible, and capable of self-direction rather than immature and irresponsible.

37. I believe that the goals, priorities, and evaluation of the advising relationship should be determined by a shared process with the advisee.

38. I like my advisees.

39. My advisees appreciate the work I go through to help them.

40. I feel my advising is effective.
Advising Self Assessment

Directions: The following self-assessment will give you an opportunity to review your advising skills and attitudes and to identify areas for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advising Skills and Attitude</th>
<th>How I Would Rate Myself</th>
<th>How Students Would Rate Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I listen carefully and concentrate on what students are saying.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I take every student and his or her concerns seriously.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I motivate students to be interested in school.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I help students understand the mission and goals of the institution.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I motivate students to get involved with and connected to the institution.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I help students see the connection between educational programs and future careers.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I help students identify and build on their strengths.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I know the resources on campus when students need referrals.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I am knowledgeable and up-to-date concerning institution policies, procedures, general education and degree requirements, etc.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I use questions effectively to understand student needs and concerns.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I don’t let strong personal beliefs and opinions get in the way of effective advising.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I effectively monitor student progress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I care about students and their success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. I show students I can help them as an advisor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I reach out to student advisees who don’t seek help.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I make students’ interests and curiosities a major focus of advising.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Self-Assessment: Advising Communication

Directions: The following self-assessment will give you an opportunity to review your communication skills and attitudes and to identify areas for improvement. Rate each item on a scale of 6 to 1, with 6 being high.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal Skills</th>
<th>How I Would Rate Myself</th>
<th>How Students Would Rate Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I listen carefully and concentrate on what students are saying.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I take every student and his or her concerns seriously.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I motivate students to be interested in school.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I help students understand the mission and goals of the institution.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I motivate students to get involved with and connected to the institution.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I help students see the connection between educational programs and future careers.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I help students identify and build on their strengths.</td>
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<td>9. I am knowledgeable and up-to-date concerning institution policies, procedures, general education and degree requirements, etc.</td>
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<td>10. I use questions effectively to understand student needs and concerns.</td>
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<td>11. I don’t let strong personal beliefs and opinions get in the way of effective advising.</td>
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<td>12. I effectively monitor student progress.</td>
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<td>15. I reach out to student advisees who don’t seek help.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I make students’ interests and curiosities a major focus of advising.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Advising Needs Assessment Survey

The following statements are designed to help us better understand your feelings of confidence and preparedness in carrying out the responsibilities of an advisor.

- For the first eight items indicate whether you feel: Very Uninformed (VUI), Uninformed (UI), Informed (I), or Very Informed (VI).
- For the next 29 items indicate whether you feel: Very Uncomfortable (VUC), Uncomfortable (UC), Comfortable (C), or Very Comfortable (VC).
- If the statement applies to an area which you do not consider a part of your responsibility as an advisor, please check Does Not Apply (DNA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How knowledgeable are you about advising students on:</th>
<th>VUI</th>
<th>UI</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>DNA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your college’s requirements and precedes (transfer credits, graduation, dismissal, prerequisites, registration, drop/adds, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Students referral services (counseling, financial aid, job placement, academic support service, etc.)</td>
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<td>3. Community resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Career opportunities and the world of work</td>
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<td>5. Resources for students with handicaps/learning disabilities</td>
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<td>6. Your college’s programs of study (majors)</td>
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<td>7. Graduate school opportunities</td>
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<td>8. Articulation agreements with two-year colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>How comfortable do you feel about:</td>
<td>VUC</td>
<td>UI</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The interview process</td>
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<td>2. Your legal responsibility/liability as an advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Your role as an advocate for your advisees</td>
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<td>4. Your role as an interpreter of the college’s rules, procedures, and expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Your role as a referral agent</td>
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<td>6. Assisting advisees in developing problem-solving skills</td>
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<td>7. Understanding your advisees as individuals</td>
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<td>8. Advising the undecided or exploratory student</td>
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<td>9. Advising the under-prepared student</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Interpreting and defining general education requirements</td>
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<td>11. Being an active listener</td>
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<td>12. Knowing how to ask questions and focus the advising interview</td>
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<td>13. Helping your advisees explore their values/life goals</td>
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<td>14. Helping your advisees gain self-confidence</td>
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<td>15. Advising students of color</td>
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<td>16. Accepting your advisees self-determination and self-direction</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Knowing how to establish rapport with your advisees</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Helping your advisees explore their educational and occupational objectives, interests</td>
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<td>19. Helping your advisees explore educational/career alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Identifying your advisee’s problem behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Using confrontational skills with advisees, when necessary</td>
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<td>22. Participating in advising development programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Explaining to your advisees your responsibilities as their advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Explaining to your advisees what you expect of them</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Maintaining a file on each of your advisees</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Teaching decision-making skills to your advisees</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Student development theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Discussing non-academic and personal topics with your advisees</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Special advising needs of adult learners</td>
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NACADA Advising Certification Program

Advisor Certification: A History and Update-Virginia N. Gordon, Chair, Task Force on Advisor Certification

The first NACADA Task Force on Advisor Certification was established in 2001 to explore the feasibility of creating a “program to award certificates in academic advising to NACADA members.” That group recommended that certificates be awarded and standards leading to such certificates be established. The reasons for establishing such a program were to:

- Help individual advisors establish and maintain credibility with the aid of such external standards;
- Give novice advisors clear goals to strive for;
- Give administrators external standards to refer to on the hiring, evaluation, and promotion of academic advisors;
- Give colleges and universities standards for various assessment and accreditation purposes; and
- Influence graduate programs related to academic advising.

The NACADA Board of Directors accepted the Task Force’s recommendation and charged a second Task Force in 2002 to continue this exploration. This group was assigned the task of recommending the specific categories of advising competencies that all effective advisors should be able to demonstrate. The Task Force proposed that competencies in the following core areas of advisor knowledge and skills are essential to effective advising:

- Foundations Knowledge

In this category, advisors will describe and explain their advising philosophy and the theoretical frameworks that influence their advising approaches. They will be knowledgeable about the CAS Standards and will describe how they incorporate NACADA’s core values into their advising. The issues may be included here.

- Knowledge of College Student Characteristics

Advisors will have a general knowledge of the characteristics of college students and will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the student demographics of their institution and the unique characteristics of the students they advise. They will have an understanding of multicultural differences and how this influences the way they approach students from different cultures. Although student development theory is an obvious choice, they may demonstrate familiarity with any theory (from any discipline) that has implications for understanding the characteristics of the students they advise.

- Knowledge of Higher Education

Since advisors work in a variety of higher education settings, it is crucial they have knowledge of the history of higher education in general and their institution specifically. Advisors should also be familiar with the current issues facing higher education including ethical and legal
implications affecting advising. They should have a basic knowledge of academic disciplines and the development and rationale for the curriculum.

- Career Advising Knowledge and Skills

Many students expect their advisor to discuss career issues that relate to their overall college education and the occupational relationships with their academic major(s) in particular. They should be familiar with the career resources that are appropriate for student access, such as the Internet, career library and other career services on their campuses. They should be able to demonstrate their understanding of the career decision-making process in the context of advising and should have the advising skills to assist students to confirm, select or change a major.

- Communications and Interpersonal Skills

How advisors communicate with students is an obvious requisite for effective advising. Advisors must demonstrate their ability to relate to individuals and groups of students using communication, helping (counseling), and problem-solving skills. Competent writing skills are important as advisors communicate with students and colleagues through e-mail and other technologies.

- Knowledge and Application of Advising Skills at Local Institution

Although advisors work in a higher education setting, their knowledge of their local institution is paramount. They should be able to demonstrate knowledge of their institution’s mission and goals, institutional policies and procedures. They must be experts in the discipline and curricula for which they advise. They should be familiar with retention issues on their local campus, graduation requirements, and both campus and community referral resources.

- Technological Knowledge and Skills

Advisors must demonstrate their knowledge and usage of their institution’s technological systems that are integral to academic advising. They should be equally competent in other technological tools (e.g., e-mail, Web browsers) and tasks (e.g., downloading software, file management).

These knowledge and skills are the core competencies that have been identified by the Task Force thus far. Since identifying these competencies is still in the formative stage, some may be added, deleted, or changed. The next step is to explore how advisors might demonstrate their competencies in these areas. Several methods have been identified completion of approved workshops or seminars; “knowledge-based” examinations that may be offered in person or on the Web; or a combination of workshops or seminars; or knowledge-and-skill-based tests that would apply these competencies to the workplace. To that end, the NACADA Executive Office staff is currently in contact with consulting firms that work with professional organizations considering certification programs. These consultants help organizations move through the process of planning, developing and designing programs. In addition, the NACADA Board asked that the Professional Development Committee and the Task Force look at what professional development activities might contribute to the earning of a “seat time” certificate acknowledging exposure to these areas of knowledge. Virginia N. Gordon, Ohio State University, Main Campus 614-488-4749
Kansas State University’s Graduate Certificate Program in Academic Advising

Kansas State University offers a Graduate Certificate in Academic Advising in partnership with NACADA. Development is ongoing to offer the 14 semester credit hour program “at a distance” via the internet. All courses are self-paced within a semester timeframe. Students work independently, yet share comments and questions via electronic communications.

The Academic Advising Graduate Certificate Program provides an opportunity for faculty, full-time academic advisors, and administrators to gain an understanding of myriad issues and skills needed to deliver effective academic advising.

This program is designed for:

1. Practicing advisors and administrators who desire more formal education relating to academic advising.
2. Faculty seeking advising knowledge beyond their discipline.
3. Graduate students anticipating academic advising roles.

Frequently asked questions about this new program:

- What course must I complete?
- How are the classes delivered? Timeframe?
- What technology is required for me to take these courses?
- How do I get started?
- What are the costs?
- Will these classes transfer to a graduate degree program, and can I transfer courses into this program?

For more information: http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/GraduateCertificate/index.htm
What are Some Ethical Principles of Academic Advising?\(^1\)

**Ethical**

Conforming to accepted professional standards of conduct.

Academic advisors confront ethical problems and can benefit from being able to draw on a system of ethical principles. Such principles, to be credible, should be philosophically defensible and not merely reflective of individual tastes.

**Four Fundamental Ethical Ideas**

**Utility**

The ideal of utility tells us always to act so as to bring about the most favorable possible balance of benefit over harm for the largest number of individuals (counting all affected individuals as equally important) for the long run as well as the immediate future. This is the notion that has been summarized a bit simplistically in the slogan “the greatest good for the greatest number.” Philosophers call utility a *consequentialist* principle because it judges actions according to their consequences.

Utilitarians believe that persons facing an ethical decision must calculate the like results of alternative courses of action and choose the one that appears likely to bring about the most benefit or least harm.

**Justice**

The principle of justice holds that we must treat all individuals equally, granting no one rights or privileges that are not granted to all. This idea of fairness strikes a responsive chord in most of us.

Justice is not a consequentialist ideal. Fairness is desirable in itself, irrespective of any benefit that may accrue as a result of it.

\(^1\) Materials developed by Marc Lowenstein and Thomas Grites, Stockton State College and published in *NACADA Journal*, Volume 13, Number 1, Spring 1993.
Respect for Persons

Respect for persons commands us to treat individuals as ends in themselves, never solely as means to our own ends, and to treat them as rational, autonomous agents, not merely as things that can be manipulated. Some rules that follow from these abstractions are (a) to tell people the truth, which they need if they are to make decisions; (b) to respect their privacy; and (c) to support their autonomy.

This ideal, too, is distinct from the consequentialist approach. People are entitled to make their own decisions and to know the truth while doing so, whether or not the resulting decisions will be the best for all concerned or even for themselves. We are forbidden from manipulating others even to bring about worthy goals.

Fidelity

Fidelity commands us to live up to commitments that we have made, both explicitly and implicitly. For example, it requires us to keep our promises. A little less obviously, it states that our choices often commit us to responsibilities we may not be aware of.

As justice and respect for persons, fidelity is not based on consequentialism. The obligation to keep promises is not contingent on whether we like the consequences of doing so.

From these philosophical foundations we can derive seven ethical principles for academic advising. Attention should be paid not only to the explanation of each principle but also to the ideals from which it is derived.
### Ethical Principles For Advising

1. **Seek the best possible education for the advisee.** This is a utilitarian principle. In an educational setting, the good that we hope to maximize is education and its attendant benefits. It is not always easy to judge what will be the best education; our obligation is to do our best with the information available. This will benefit students, people with whom they will later have contact, and society as a whole.

2. **Treat students equitably; don't play favorites or create special privileges.** Treating students equitably does not mean treating them all the same (e.g., advising them all to have the same major). Differences in students' needs require us to spend more time with one than with another and to advise one more intrusively than another. But the fact that we might like one student more or that we might share another's values would not justify differential treatment. This principle clearly follows from the ideal of justice.

3. **Enhance the advisee's ability to make decisions.** This is a key principle of developmental academic advising, so its presence here is welcome. As we all know, we cannot accomplish this goal without permitting the advisee to make decisions. This principle is derived both from utility because it benefits the student and others in the long run and from respect for persons because it supports and develops individual autonomy.

4. **Advocate for the advisee with other offices.** Students will not get all the services they might from the college without a little help. This principle comes from fidelity because it is an implicit part of the commitment one makes by becoming an advisor. There are limitations on this principle, imposed by utility, for advocating too hard can reduce one's future effectiveness.

5. **Tell the advisee the truth about college policies and procedures, and tell others (e.g., faculty, staff, and administrators) the truth as well, but respect the confidentiality of interactions with the advisee.** As a case of truth-telling this is derived from respect for persons, which also includes privacy. Additionally it comes from fidelity, for confidentiality is part of the implicit commitment one makes to an advisee.

6. **Support the institution's educational philosophy and its policies.** We need to make special note of this principle because it may not come naturally to advisors who think for themselves and have their own educational philosophies, but it comes from fidelity because it is another commitment that is built into the moral contract one makes when accepting an advising position. Note that this principle does not preclude arguing against policies in appropriate forums.

7. **Accord colleagues appropriate professional courtesy and respect.** This is not only about being polite to people; it is also a prohibition against encouraging students to believe negative things about the competence or character of colleagues. Opportunities to observe or violate this duty arise when a student asks which instructor to take a course from or asks for confirmation of something that “they” are saying against a particular individual. This principle is based on utility because an institution where such a rule is not followed loses effectiveness and because a student's inclination to gossip and jump to hasty conclusions is unduly reinforced, with long-term consequences.
Summary

To summarize in addressing an ethical problem in academic advising:

1. Adopt the ethical point of view. Distance yourself from whatever personal stake you have and look at the situation disinterestedly.

2. Apply the ethical ideals and ethical principles for academic advising to determine what action they indicate.

3. If a conflict arises, with different principles dictating incompatible solutions:
   − seek a way of honoring each of the conflicting principles to some extent,
   − compare the case at hand with other (real or imaginary) cases that differ in small ways to identify salient features and determine which principles seem more acceptable to disobey, and
   − compare prospective solutions, each of which will violate an ethical principle; try to identify differences in the extent or degree of violation such that one seems less problematic.

Dr. Marc Lowenstein
Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
## Advising Special Populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Important Characteristics</th>
<th>Advising Strategies</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic minorities</td>
<td>Declining percentage of African-Americans and Hispanics enrolling</td>
<td>Make efforts to enhance the college-student fit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Often have low self-concept, few positive expectations</td>
<td>Encourage their involvement on campus</td>
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<td>Academic performance related to satisfaction with college</td>
<td>Suggest campus resources when needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Achievement appears to be a problem of preparation, not of race</td>
<td>Encourage positive self-concept</td>
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<td>Lack of role models on campus</td>
<td>Avoid stereotypical attitudes and expectations</td>
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<td>Suggest academic experiences that can prove successful, especially at first</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Acknowledge the importance of role models</td>
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<td>International students</td>
<td>Increasing numbers of traditional age</td>
<td>Be prepared to translate collegiate and U.S. culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Most from Third World countries</td>
<td>Be familiar with students’ academic preparation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Academic and career concerns primary</td>
<td>Focus on designing academic plans that are relevant to home country of student</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Need practical experience in career areas</td>
<td>Encourage open view about U.S. lifestyles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Concerned with language difficulties, financial problems, and selecting relevant problems</td>
<td>Encourage involvement in college community</td>
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<td>Non-western students see instructors as revered authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>Increasing participation in college</td>
<td>Understand students/abilities and the barriers they face</td>
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<td>One or more major lie activities limited</td>
<td>Display positive attitudes about the integration of students into the college community, encourage full participation in college</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prefer to see themselves as “able” rather than “disabled”</td>
<td>Recommend support serves when needed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expressed need for removal of barriers to full participation</td>
<td>Act as an advocate for special and campus resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need for support from peers and others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academically under-prepared students</td>
<td>Increasing participation in college</td>
<td>Establish a trusting advising relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often dependent learners with low self-concept</td>
<td>Begin with intrusive advising techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many deficient in basic skills</td>
<td>Discuss the purposes of college early in the relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to experience academic success</td>
<td>Encourage development of basic skills first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hesitant to seek needed support services</td>
<td>Recommend intervention programs and campus resources when needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Susan H. Frost

*Academic Advising for Student Success*
## A Self-Inquiry for Advisors Working With Advisees Experiencing Academic Difficulty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is under achievement a problem with this advisee? Is he underachieving in all areas?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What capabilities can I infer from the advising folder?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Has this advisee any physical limiting impediments or learning disabilities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Is the problem cognitive or non-cognitive?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Do I really know the advisee’s interests? Can I use this information for more effective advising?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does this advisee have academic successes? Can I account for success in some areas, and lack of success in others?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Have I recommended the appropriate academic support services?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Do I talk with an advisee or to them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Would my assistance in planning a time schedule with the advisee be welcome?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Have I had contact with the parents or spouse of this advisee? Do they provide support for the advisee?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Is this advisee attending class regularly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Does this advisee have good study skills (e.g., not talking, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Does the advisee perceive me as a resource?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Does this advisee’s out-of-class lifestyle support their educational efforts?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Does this advisee have solid peer contacts?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Would some other faculty member be more effective as an advisor to this student?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Advising Process Model

Rapport Building → Review of Previous Sessions → Task/Problem Identification
Information Gathering (Listening)

Decision or Agreement on action or next steps

Summarizing the transaction and scheduling next contact

Identification of possible options, alternatives, or solutions
Information Giving (Talking)
From Advisor Training to Advisor Development: Creating a Blueprint for First-Year Advisors


Becoming an excellent academic advisor is a little like learning a foreign language. Our ability to use and apply vocabulary and rules of grammar lags behind our acquisition of the language itself; we gain fluency by becoming immersed in it- hearing it, speaking it, and living it. The “art of advising” – the ability to seamlessly synthesize and apply information about the student and the institution to individual student situations in ways that help students grow and make the most out of their college experience – is in large part learned in the advising chair. Advisors develop excellence over time, student by student, through an experiential synthesis of the conceptual, informational and relational components of advising.

The extent to which gaining advising "fluency" is a developmental process became apparent as we prepared a pre-conference workshop for the 2004 NACADA National Conference. We designed a workshop for first-year advisors instead of one about first-year advisors or how to train first-year advisors. As experienced trainers, we know what new advisors need to learn so the questions became: "What do new advisors think they need?" "What do they want in a session 'just for them'?" Results of our survey of workshop participants prior to the conference, along with discussion with our Advising Center staff with less than two years of advising experience, have clear implications for new advisor training.

Concerns expressed by workshop participants focused heavily on the skills needed for successful advising sessions including how to:

- be realistic yet encouraging to students in academic difficulty;
- handle students who repeatedly fail to show for appointments;
- work with students who lack the skills necessary to be competitive in selective programs;
- complete a conference within established time frames.

In short, first-year advisors felt less secure and had more questions about advising situations which demand a greater synthesis of conceptual, informational and relational skills. New advisors in our office agreed with these concerns and reported that the initial information overload subsides relatively quickly and is replaced by more professionally challenging concerns regarding how to deal with difficult advising situations.

Second, advisors new to the profession stated that they were overwhelmed. Period. We should not be surprised. First-year advisors are highly attuned to their responsibilities and to institutional and professional expectations for academic advising. They read professional literature that outlines the knowledge and skills they should possess. They study institutional mission statements that emphasize the importance and power of advising for retention. They examine advising center mission statements that extol the advisor's role in helping students achieve positive, productive academic experiences. They observe veteran advisors during training and know the standards that will be used to evaluate their actions. Therefore, first-year advisors compare themselves only to
professional “ideals” and measure themselves against the knowledge and skills of the experienced advisor.

During the workshop new advisors most wanted reassurance that they were “on the right track” and sought ideas and strategies to become better advisors. To meet these needs, we created a developmental blueprint these first-year advisors could use to measure progress toward their goals and designed activities that required them to think explicitly about synthesizing advising knowledge and relational skills. Creating the blueprint has given us, as experienced trainers, an important training tool to help new advisors have a positive and productive “first-year experience.” Our experience has broad implications for advisor trainers whether they are designing new programs or improving their current systems.

As trainers we want new advisors to excel in their chosen profession and should not needlessly discourage them. Seamless synthesis of information and relational skills does not occur within standard, short, information-driven training programs. These programs leave new advisors painfully aware of the gap between the knowledge and skills acquired during training and the expertise of their more experienced colleagues. Unfortunately most training programs leave no clear path for new advisors seeking to reach a higher level of expertise.

As a profession, we need to expand upon our short, intensive, information-driven training sessions. We should create year-long advisor development programs that recognize proficiency in advising as a developmental process and provide first-year "blueprints" in the form of clear relational and informational expectations. While first-year advisor programs should include an intensive initial training, they must go beyond that to:

- Set short-term goals in the form of clear and realistic expectations of the knowledge and skills advisors must develop within their first-year;
- Create long-term goals in the form of clear, realistic expectations for their second year and beyond;
- Establish a cohesive training program for meeting these expectations.

Higginson (2000) offers an excellent foundation for creating first-year advisor expectations. She utilizes Habley's (1995) training classifications-concept, information and relationship-to provide a comprehensive listing of training topics adaptable to any institutional or advising setting.

Consider, for example, the information component of advising. To advise effectively, advisors must have institutional knowledge (rules and regulations, academic policies, majors, minors, certificate programs) and an understanding of the students they will advise including knowledge of any special population groups. This is a tall order. What happens when we break this comprehensive set of information into smaller pieces and establish realistic expectations for both first-year and experienced advisors? If we focus on the institutional knowledge component, short-term and long-term goals might look like:

**Year One**

- Know (and/or know where to find) and be able to explain basic institutional policies, regulations and procedures.
- Basic policies, regulations and procedures are those which are most important, most used, and most likely to impact students.
Year Two and Beyond

- Know basic policies, regulations and procedures.
- Understand nuances and varied interpretations of basic institutional policies including the basis for the granting or denial of exceptions and appeals.
- Know (and/or know where to find) more specialized or less frequently encountered policies, procedures and regulations including specialized policies, procedures and regulations that pertain to specific student populations, majors, and colleges or programs.

There are distinct differences between what we expect of first-year advisors and the goals we set for advisors with more experience. Do we really expect first-year advisors to memorize every institutional policy, regulation and major requirements? Probably not; but if we provide only long-term, "ideal" expectations, we create that impression. Note that under "Year One" we ask that advisors "Know (and/or know where to find) "basic" information. We do not expect new advisors to have memorized all rules and regulations, nor to have a nuanced understanding of the various interpretations across the institution. But we do expect them to know where to find needed information. Note that we define the types of information advisors need during their first-year--basic policies, regulations and procedures--and define these as "basic."

We also need to set behavioral expectations for first-year advisors. For example, a common concern expressed by our workshop participants was how to conduct a good advising conference. We can address this relational concern with the following expectations:

Year One

- Learn to guide a conference effectively by ensuring that student questions are addressed while the advisor covers topics/ information the student needs.
- Stay within session time parameters except in unusual circumstances.
- Establish student expectations (e.g. student makes and keeps appointments).
- Integrates the teaching function of advising into conference as appropriate.

Year Two and Beyond

- Fully integrates relational and informational knowledge and skills in advising conferences.
- Able to "triage" information appropriately for individual students according to their developmental stage, needs, concerns and situations.
- Conducts conference as a conversation rather than a "Q & A" session.
- Fully integrates teaching function of advising into conference.

Again, there are substantial and significant experiential differences between the short-term and the long-term relational expectations. Advising conferences conducted by experienced advisors are jam-packed with information and teaching that is targeted appropriately for each student. Yet these conferences have an ease and fluidity about them. New advisors, still reliant on information resources, cannot squeeze as much within the conference's timeframe. The Year One expectations acknowledge the advisor's developmental stage yet set timely conferences as a goal.
New advisors must have the tools and the experiences to meet first-year expectations and progress toward long-term goals. Concrete, explicit short- and long-term expectations create a powerful blueprint for year-long advisor development. They help administrators set training priorities. Using this blueprint, initial training sessions focus on the most immediate training needs—what new advisors absolutely need to know and be able to do before advising a student in two weeks—but training doesn't end there. Subsequent training sessions, sprinkled throughout the first-year, provide developmental "next steps," that focus on synthesizing the various components of advising: nuanced understandings of policy, how to deal with difficult advising situations, what to expect from students in their second semester, how best to work with students who did not thrive in their first semester, and how to organize information and materials to improve fluidity within a conference.

Establishing concrete behavioral expectations has an impact on the delivery of training. Training activities could include interactive simulations, role plays, case studies and observations of veteran advisors. Trainers can address how to learn from advisees (e.g. how to use advising situations and information gleaned from advisees to build advisor knowledge and advising skills).

Explicit expectations allow first-year advisors to track their progress. They give administrators clear guidelines for evaluation. A set of first-year expectations may not eliminate new advisor stress, but it certainly reduces it as new advisors gain perspective on their professional development.

Higginson (2000) notes that most advisor training programs focus heavily on information. We can, and should, do more to help new advisors reach their potential. A first-year advisor development program that incorporates explicit short- and long-term goals and expectations improves our training programs, gives new advisors a more positive and productive first-year experience, and provides a blueprint for achieving advising excellence.

References


## Advising Session Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals for Student Advising Sessions</th>
<th>Importance to You</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I want to get to know advisees as individuals and am interested in knowing about and discussing aspects of their personal lives</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I want advising sessions to focus only on academic and career areas.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I want advising sessions restricted to discussions of course scheduling.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I expect to see my advisees frequently.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I expect advisees to do “assignments” between advising sessions.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I want advisees to get to know me as an individual.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I want to establish an ongoing relationship with advisees.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I want advisees to perceive me as thorough and competent.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I want advisees to make their own decisions.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I stress career planning with my advisees</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. With course scheduling, I take an approach that includes motivation, preparation, and fit.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I take a strengths-based approach with advisees.</td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Advising Interview

Though the variety of topics covered in an advising appointment depends upon the purpose of the appointment, a certain structure or process is common to all. Following is an overview of some techniques that can be used in an advising session.

1. Opening – Greet the student by name and in a relaxed manner. The student may be nervous, so a warm welcome and a low-key question such as “What can I help you with today?” can be reassuring at the same time that it gets the session started.

2. Talking with the Student – The student may find it difficult to express himself. Resist the temptation to “help” by putting words in the student's mouth, finishing the sentence yourself, or otherwise taking over the conversation. Careful phrasing of your questions and indicating that you are receptive to the responses should facilitate good communication.

3. Silences in the Conversation – Silences do not necessarily mean a breakdown in communication or a lack of activity. The student (or the advisor) may be searching for words or reflecting upon something that has already been said.

4. Admitting your Ignorance – If the student asks a question regarding factual information to which you do not know the answer, admit it. Get the information immediately, if possible, or call the student back. While one person cannot be expected to know everything, it is reasonable to expect the advisor to get the information in question. Students have greater respect for the advisor who does not hesitate to admit his ignorance.

5. Avoiding the Personal Pronoun – Using the word “I” turns the focus of the advising session away from the advisee, toward the advisor. Expressions like “if I were you, I would” and “I think” express the advisor's opinion or experiences and are inappropriate unless they are explicitly requested. Most of the time, the advisor's role is not to express his point of view, but rather, to help the student to formulate his own opinion.

6. Bad News – When the advisor must give the student bad news, it is not helpful to minimize the gravity of the situation or to be unrealistically optimistic about what the student can do to handle it. However, it is very important that the advisor continue to express an attitude that is receptive and non-judgmental. She can demonstrate her support of the student by helping to put the issue into proper perspective and focusing attention on the positive actions that can be taken to resolve the problem. This may require additional appointments.

7. Additional Problems – Sometimes the student will have unexpressed questions or problems beyond the one, which appears to be the reason for the appointment. The advisor can give the student an opening by asking, “Is there something else you would like to ask about?” or “Do you have something else on your mind?”

8. The Frequent Visitor – One of the most difficult advisees to work with will meet frequently with his advisor. This student appears to be receptive to the advisor's suggestions and will often say “I feel so much better after talking to you,” but, in fact, never follows up on the information and strategies discussed during the appointment. This student seems to continue to hope that talking about something will make it happen. Other frequent visitors are sympathy seekers, complainers, and the overly dependent. While it is true that their
willingness to keep appointments indicates some success on the part of the advisor, they take up time that could be available to other students.

9. Setting Limits on the Appointment – The appointment is normally a fixed length of time. It is better if the advisor and advisee realize this from the beginning. Follow-up appointments can be made, if necessary. However, there are times when an advisor sees a student in crisis and time constraints need to be set aside.

10. Ending the Appointment – When the advising session is finished, it is easy to get overly involved in casual conversation. This can extend the appointment far beyond the allotted time. A phrase such as, “Do you think we have done all we can for today?” or “Let's make another appointment to get into this further,” effectively maintains a friendly yet professional tone.

Adapted from Darley’s Interview Techniques. Prepared by the University of Delaware College of Arts and Science Advising Center.

http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Advising-Appointment.htm
Interview Questions

Examples of probing questions for helping exploratory students to become aware of the choice process. (These are not in any order but are intended as possible probes for initiating discussion.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Exploration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As far back as you can remember, what general occupational fields have you thought of?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What subjects did you enjoy in high school? In what subjects were your best grades?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider your strengths to be in the math/science areas or in the social sciences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of extra-curricular activities did you take part in high school? Which were the most enjoyable? What did you learn about yourself from them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your best personal qualities? What do your friends like the most about you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you see as your limitations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name the highest point in your life so far (your greatest accomplishment). What about the experience made it special?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what kind of work environment do you picture yourself five years out of college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you have a spare hour to use, what do you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are you in college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does a college degree mean to you?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Major/Occupational Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What academic areas are you currently considering? What do you like about these areas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What occupations are you considering? What about these occupations attracts you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do your abilities and skills fit the tasks necessary to succeed in these areas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will these occupations provide the rewards and satisfactions you want for your life? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the differences among the two (2) majors (occupations) you are tentatively considering? The similarities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has influenced your ideas about these alternatives?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Decision Making**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you ever have trouble making decision? Little ones? Important ones?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you generally go about making a decision? Describe the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What specific strategies do you use?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you use the same method for all types of decisions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Would you describe yourself as a spontaneous or a systematic decision maker?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you make decisions by yourself or do you need other people’s opinions first?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you feeling anxious about deciding on a major? Pressured?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How long do you think it will take you to make a decision? How long do you want it to take?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Virginia Gordon
The Ohio State University
### Seven Basic Question Types

Behind every question is a basic reason for asking it. By making your reason clear in the framing of a question, you are much more apt to get the desired response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Question</th>
<th>Goal of Question</th>
<th>Positioning of Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>To get information.</td>
<td>Question beginning with &quot;what, where, when, why, who and how.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanatory</td>
<td>To get additional information or to broaden discussion.</td>
<td>“How would that help?” “How would you go about doing that?” “What other things should be considered:”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifying</td>
<td>To get proof – to challenge old ideas and to get new ones.</td>
<td>“How do you know?” “What makes you say that?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading</td>
<td>To introduce a thought of your own.</td>
<td>“Would this be a possible solution?” “What do you think of this plan?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothetical</td>
<td>To use assumptions of suppositions.</td>
<td>“What would happen if we did it this way?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>To get a decision or agreement.</td>
<td>“Which of these plans do you think is best?” “Is one or two o’clock best for you?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinative</td>
<td>To develop common agreement. To take action.</td>
<td>“Do we agree that this is our next step?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ten Commandments of Good Listening in Advising

1. Stop talking!
2. Show the advisee you are ready to listen (e.g., body language, posture, eye contact).
3. Control distractions.
4. Accept the advisee’s attitudes and feelings.
5. Avoid arguing, making judgments, criticisms.
6. Ask mostly open-ended questions.
7. Re-state what you think you heard.
8. Ask for clarification or expansion.
9. Keep the advisee talking.
10. Stop talking!
**Decision-Making Skills**

Decision-making is a process each person is called upon to use at some time. It involves making a choice, selecting from two or more alternatives. When one understands and uses decision-making skills, a satisfying decision is usually the outcome.

The client is often in the position of having to make a decision. Sometimes the client comes to you seeking a decision. It is important for you to assist the client through the decision-making process. In this way the client may learn how to make a decision and may make a decision he feels is his own.

There are five main elements to the decision-making process:

1. Define the problem and clarify the situation.
2. Collect and use information relevant to a decision and search for alternatives.
3. Evaluate the alternatives against identified criteria.
4. Assess the risks involved with the decision.
5. Develop a plan of action and follow through.

**Step One: Define the Problem and Clarify the Situation**

The purpose of this step is to make sure you understand the situation. You can do this by defining your goals of the outcome you want – a problem solved or a change you desire, and values as they relate to the situation. The most important factor in decision making is one’s values. Decisions are based on what one values, on what is important to a person. In helping a client make a decision you should begin by helping the client clarify his values, state his goals. What solution would be ideal? How much time do you have to decide? For example, the client may be seeking help regarding a program of studies. You can ask him to list three outcomes he hopes to gain from his college education. The client’s list will be one indication of his values or goals. Once these goals are clear, objectives can be stated.

You must be careful not to impose values. Your role is to help the client determine his own values. Once the client has some understanding of what is important to him, he is able to take the next step in the decision-making process. He also learned something about himself.

**Step Two: Collect and Use Information Relevant to a Decision and Search for Alternatives**

Decisions are made on the basis of information as well as values. The knowledge that one has influences the decisions one makes. To use information well in the decision-making process it must be collected and evaluated.

Look for ways to achieve the outcome you want. What did you do in similar situations in the past? What have other people done when they have had a problem like this? What can you read that might help you discover solutions? Find as many alternatives as you can. The more alternatives you have, the more likely you are to find an acceptable solution.
You are a source of information for the client. As such, you should try to channel as much information as possible to the client. The various offices which serve the student (e.g. career development, financial aid) are sources of information. Other students are sources of information. It is your role to assist the client in gathering information from as many sources as possible.

**Step Three: Evaluate the Alternatives Against Identified Criteria**

Once information is gathered, it must be evaluated. List the standards an alternative should meet to satisfy you. Judge each of the alternatives by checking it against your criteria, i.e. the outcomes or ideal solutions.

Rate the desirability, probability, and risk of each alternative as high, medium, or low. The desirability is how much you want this outcome. The probability is the likelihood the alternative would bring the outcome you desire. The risk is the possible loss to you if you choose the alternative. If you are not happy with any of the alternatives, try to find new ones or revise the old ones. You may also need to change your criteria. Then select the best alternative. Review it closely to make sure your choice meets your goal.

You can assist the client in this evaluation by helping him view it in terms of his clarified values as well as outcomes. The student advisor does not answer the question or even suggest a response. Your role is to help the client evaluate his information by focusing on his objectives:

- What goals must the solution meet?
- What values are involved?
- Is there enough time to resolve the situation?
- How much money or other resources do I have to work with?
- Who could help me?
- What parts of my life do I not want changed by this decision?

Once information is gathered and evaluated the decision-maker is in a better position to determine the risks involved in the decision.

**Step Four: Assess the Risks Involved with the Decision**

Any decision one makes involves risks. A decision-maker has conscious control over the decision made but does not have as much control over the outcome of the decision. Risk, therefore, is involved. Yet risk does not mean blind chance. A decision-maker can separate the decision from the possible outcomes and can determine the risks involved. Then risks can be ranked.

You can assist the client in this determination of risks. Together they should evaluate the client’s values and the information he has gathered in regard to the decision, consider the possible outcome of the decision, determine the risks involved for each outcome and then prioritize the risk.

Support and identification are two useful tools for you to use in helping with the decision-making process. You do not become the decision-maker for the client but can identify with the client by
giving examples of personal decision-making situations. Such a method is supportive of the client because it says: “I know what you are going through.”

Step Five: Develop a Plan of Action and Follow Through

The plan the decision-maker develops for carrying out the decision is the *strategy*. This is a coordination of the knowledge of one’s values and objectives and the information one has regarding outcomes and risks. The way in which these are put together to carry out the decision is the strategy. As you plan and take action, you may get new information. As this occurs, review your plan to make sure you are moving toward your goal. If not, you may need to change your plan or develop a new one.

The student advisor can assist the client by noting the importance of developing a strategy.
When an Advisor Should Be Concerned

Being aware of signals that indicate the possibility of problems can be helpful to an advisor in making a judgment about whether or where to refer a student.

The following signs may indicate that a student could benefit from a referral.

**Unusual Behavior**

1. Withdrawal from usual social interaction
2. Marked seclusion and unwillingness to communicate
3. Persistent antisocial behavior such as lying, stealing, or other deviant acts
4. Lack of social skills or deteriorating personal hygiene
5. Inability to sleep or excessive sleeping
6. Loss of appetite or excessive appetite (starving or bingeing behavior)
7. Unexplained crying or outbursts of anger
8. Acutely increased activity (i.e., ceaseless talking or extreme restlessness)
9. Repeated absence from classes
10. Unusual irritability
11. Thought disorder (i.e., the student’s conversation does not make sense)
12. Suspiciousness, irrational feeling of persecution

**Traumatic Changes in Personal Relationships**

1. Death of a family member of a close friend
2. Difficulties in marriage or family relationships
3. Dating and courtship difficulties
4. Sexual abuse (i.e., rape, incest, harassment)
5. Terminal/chronic illness of a family member

**Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

1. Indications of excessive drinking or drug abuse (i.e., binges, neglects eating or physical appearance, impaired thinking)
2. Severe drug reaction (i.e., bizarre behavior, unexplained “blackouts” of memory)
3. Being a child of an alcoholic or drug dependent parent
Academic Problems

1. Dramatic drop in grade point average
2. Deficient reading speed or comprehension
3. Poor study habits
4. Incapacitating test anxiety
5. Sudden changes in academic performance
6. Lack of class attendance

Career Choice Problems

1. Dissatisfaction with academic major
2. Unrealistic career aspirations
3. Confusion with regard to interests, abilities, or values
4. Chronic indecisiveness or choice conflict
5. Uncertainty of career alternatives

Taken individually, any of these signals may be sufficient to warrant intervention.
Referral Skills

1. Referral decisions – ability to determine whether a referral should be made.
   - Student asks
   - Request outside your range of knowledge
   - Request/problem outside your area of expertise
   - Someone you feel you have not helped but needs help
   - Student reluctant to discuss problem
   - Physical or psychological symptoms or signs

2. Referral process – ability to professionally refer the student to the proper person, office, or agency for help.
   - Explain in a clear and open manner why you feel it desirable or necessary to refer.
   - Take into account the student’s emotional and psychological reaction to the referral.
   - Get the student to discuss his problem(s), consider reasons for referral, evaluate possible sources of help, and assist in the selection of the specific person, office, or agency.
   - Explain fully the services which can be obtained from the resource person, office, or agency you are recommending.
   - Reassure student about capability and qualifications of resource to help meet the particular need expressed.
   - Attempt to personalize the experience by giving the student the name of a contact person to ask for, or help by calling for an appointment for the student. Give directions to the office if necessary.
   - Discuss with the student any need for transfer of data and obtain consent and approval for the transfer.
   - Assist the student in formulating questions to ask or approaches to take.
   - Transmit to the person, office, or agency, which will assist the student all the information essential for helping the student.

3. Follow up – ability to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the referral.
   - Determine if the student kept their appointment.
   - Discuss with the student his evaluation of the help received from the agency, office, or person.
   - Determine whether you selected the appropriate source of help for the student.
Some Ways to Reduce Advising-related Problems and Complaints

Here are a few effective ways to reduce problems and complaints. What others can you add to the list?

1. Take good notes on advising sessions, especially concerning recommendations, commitments, exceptions and referrals.

2. In appropriate situations, ask students to sign statements that they understand and agree to actions that you are taking or that the student is taking.

3. Don’t answer questions if you aren’t sure of the correct answer. Instead, say you need to check or to look up the information.

4. When talking with students or explaining something, frequently ask them questions that probe for understanding.

5. When talking with students or explaining something, remind them to take notes and write down important information for their own records.

6. Remember that students should be able to rely on the accuracy of information provided by advisors and other institutional agents.

7. The advisor is an agent of the institution and cannot disclaim this responsibility. What is said may constitute an implied contract.

8. Ascertain your institution’s interpretation of the Buckley Amendment - how it is applied locally.

9. Exercise care with student (peer advisors, student workers, etc.) access to confidential student files and records.

10. Require a written waiver from a student before releasing student information to third party.

11. Keep anecdotal notes on advising contacts in student’s files.

12. Any waivers of policy, degree requirements, etc., should be in writing and maintained in the student’s file. Avoid oral permissions and waivers.

13. If or when requirements, policies, procedures, etc., change, make extraordinary efforts to inform students of the changes.

14. Review all institutional publications and other program/degree information. Make every effort to deliver what is “promised.”

15. Include a disclaimer in institutional publications (“…does not constitute a contract…may be changed”). The institution may with good reason change requirements.


17. Refer students to persons competent to give advice, and in some cases, persons officially recognized by the institution to disseminate information.
18. Be accessible to students – open lines of communication can avert many potential misunderstandings.

19. Refrain from voicing negative opinions regarding individuals, policies, courses, etc. to students (or anyone for that matter).

20. Do your best to provide sound, accurate information. Act in good faith and exercise your best professional judgment.
Legal Issues and Advising

Rules of the Road (Susan Daniell, University of Georgia)

- Verbal statements can create terms the institution must fulfill. Be careful about what you commit the institution to.
- Treat all advisee information as confidential unless an emergency exists.
- Advisors have a “duty to warn” if an advisee threatens harm to himself or others.
- Know the provisions of the Buckley Amendment and how it is administered on your campus.
- Exercise care when allowing peer advisors access to student records.
- Avoid voicing opinions that criticize or undermine institutional requirements, policy, procedures, or regulations.
- Record only facts in written anecdotal notes.
- Use graduation checklists or audits.

Some Good Advice for Advisors

- Attempt to act in the student’s best interest at all times.
- Use common sense and your best professional advice.
- Adhere to a reasonable standard of professional judgment.
- Stay well informed on institutional policies and procedures.
- Be consistent.
- When in doubt, seek legal counsel.
Some Higher Education Trends with Possible Implications for Academic Advising

1. The characteristics of college/university students will become more diverse (e.g., racial ethnicity, age, academic preparation, first-generation, disabilities, sexual orientation)
2. Students will continue to be more career and outcome oriented.
3. Students in transition (e.g., adults, transfers) will become an increasingly important higher education constituency.
4. Students will have increased expectations of their educational experience and will become more vocal if expectations are not met.
5. Colleges/universities resources will be more limited and demands on faculty will increase.
6. Time to degree completion rate will be mandated by some stage legislatures.
7. Colleges/universities will rely more extensively on technology in delivery of educational programs and services.
8. Faculty rewards will be broadened beyond teaching and scholarship to include other areas of contribution.
9. Distance learning options for students will increase.
10. Colleges/universities will develop more cooperative, integrated, and centralized efforts among functional areas to better meet students academic and career planning needs.

Some Higher Education Trends With Possible Implications for Academic Advising – Group Discussion

1. Do you basically agree with the trend as stated or modified?
2. Would you add additional important trends to the listing?
3. What are some specific implications for the organization and delivery of academic advising services on your campus?