

Philosophy of Academic Advising

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My personal philosophy of academic advising stems from my 25+ years of experience in the field, my current role as a developer and administrator of an advisor training program, and my own personal beliefs on the role of education in our lives.

Academic advising is, above all things, a student-centered practice that exists to help students. At Wayne State University, the published vision of academic advising is of a “proactive, developmental, professional, and intentional practice that promotes student learning and enhances student learning and success.” I believe my role as an advisor is to support this vision by providing a safe, respectful, atmosphere in which to assess, discuss, and meet student needs.

In addition, beyond simply meeting student needs, it is my role as an advisor to go beyond the needs presented by each student; to understand each student’s goals – academic, professional, and personal – and to provide whatever knowledge, wisdom, information, and advice I can toward the “next steps” in the achievement of these goals. If I am successful at this, a student will leave my office not only with their primary questions answered, but with a sense of having their goals clarified and understood, with a positive feeling of being challenged and supported in these goals, and with a specific plan for the further development of these goals.

My current role as coordinator of the WSU Advisor Training Academy has instilled in me a deep appreciation for the role of the NACADA core competencies in advising practice, and for the responsibility advisors have to be fully trained and competent in the informational, relational, and conceptual components of academic advising. Competence in accurately communicating program requirements, university policy, campus resources, and career information is key to our job as advisors and provides the foundation for all other work with students. Building a relationship with each student based on respect as well as an interest in, and appreciation for, difference is also paramount to our work and is a skill that must be constantly monitored and refined. Finally, attention to the theories, styles, techniques, and concepts that inform our profession, and that are continually evolving through scholarship, is critical. It is how we grow as professionals and is what allows us to enhance the effectiveness of our practice.

Ultimately, academic advising allows me to participate in what I believe to be the primary purpose of higher education – as a means for individuals to make meaning out of life and to create change in the world. This comes from challenging students to think deeply, critically, and creatively; to make connections between what they learn on campus and what is happening in their lives and in the world at large. As advisors, we serve as stewards to this process and are often witness to these connections as they happen in our offices, through our programming and as a result of our conversations. I feel it is a privilege to share in this mission and to know

that, in my small way, I have contributed to the education and development of others and, by extension, to that of the community and the world.