

# ***Personal Philosophy of Advising: Version 1 – 2023***

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### ***Introduction***

In my advising practice I take an approach that combines two of NACADA's advising theories and my experience with my student population. This allows me to serve the individual in front of me to the best of my abilities. Before delving into how I support the students that I advise I want to give you some background on where my philosophy stems from.

### ***Where am I in my career?***

I recently earned my Master of Education in Higher Education Leadership. I have been advising students in different ways for more than three years and supporting college students for close to a decade. During this time, I have had the pleasure of working with many different populations of students. They have all taken different paths to their degree, some of the students just starting their education while others were returning after multiple gap years, they have different things that are holding them back, different goals, and each student has their own 'why'. Working with so many different populations in a short period of time has allowed me to see that while we all work with specific populations, each student has very specific and individual needs.

### ***What types of populations have I worked with and in what capacity?***

I started my career in housing, supporting freshman to senior year students. I was tasked with providing programming to students based on their needs such as mental health, living on a set budget, and how to figure out what to do after graduation. In this position I worked with traditional students, students who needed one-on-one support, students who were getting into trouble, and those who were struggling. I have also had many different roles in higher education since my first. I have advised at a community college while managing the housing community at the same college. While at this college I supported many of the same students as before, but I also supported transfer planning and MTA, students who needed the extra year or two to be able to attend the school of their dreams and students who needed the smaller class sizes to thrive. I worked in admissions at a 4-year private institution helping transfer students with their next transition to reach their goal, advising them past their degree and into what they need to get the job they are striving for. Finally, in my current position, advising Adult Learners and Returning Warriors at Wayne State, I support students who left because they had no other choice and need a support system as they return to higher education looking for their next step, their next raise, or simply for the accomplishment of receiving their degree.

### ***How does my approach work?***

I strive to provide the students I work with a consistent connection to campus through communication and support. I cater my advising to each student trying to make sure that they walk away (or log off) with what they need to move forward, even if it was not what they came in requesting. Students make advising appointments because they have questions or needs that they cannot answer themselves. They may also have

questions they do not know to ask. I reveal their unique situation by trying to answer a few questions in each appointment.

*Why is the student returning to pursue their degree?*

The motive behind the students' need to pursue their degree is the driving force that helps them to move forward. This reasoning is often very personal to the student and without it they would not be putting in the immense amount of effort needed for each class. It adds to the value of their degree. I feel that as an advisor, knowing each student's 'why' is a big part of how I support them to their end goal.

*What do they need to be successful?*

I answer this question by asking about their fears. Are they worried about classes, time management when juggling work, life, and school, paying for classes, or asking for help? What are the things that they are anticipating struggling with and what are the resources that are available to help them succeed? Many times, students are worried about facing the same issues they did the first time around, but sometimes they have a whole new set of barriers to overcome. By getting an understanding of a student's fears, I am able to provide resources to overcome them.

*Where do I fit in?*

I am taking the information that students give me and trying to help them problem-solve. If they are trusting me with their fears, I want to be able to provide them with comfort. What support can I give them when the issues they struggled to navigate in their past college experiences arise again? I look at support services on and off campus that may be able to support them. Do they require more check ins and communication? How available am I? I try to ensure students' needs are met and they have an open line to me when they find themselves stuck.

***How is my approach affected by theory?***

My approach stems from both the proactive (Intrusive) and developmental theories of advising. I am proactive in that I like to be prepared for my student meetings: preparing for questions they might have and for questions they should have. I like to have the answers to their individual needs before the questions are formed. Being prepared in this way allows me to motivate students and help them find solutions to their problems. I also reach out to my special population students throughout the semester using a communication plan. These interactions are proactive by including resources that they might need for the time in the semester they are in, but also developmental by providing questions the student needs to be thinking of. I am an intrusive advisor, but I do not make it seem intrusive, my outreach comes from a place of genuine interest in student success, and support.

I use a developmental approach when I ask students questions to produce their 'why'. While many students know their 'why' for returning to school, some do not put importance on it. I think it is a crucial developmental step for them to have their 'why' at the forefront of their thoughts. I can also help them come up with goals and identify if

their goals are just for the semester or more long term. Helping students find these things out about themselves allows them to have a more defined purpose in their return. Asking them questions and leading them to answers allows them to gain skills that will help them through their education and beyond. They learn how to problem-solve, why connections are important, and that it is okay to ask for help.

### ***Conclusion***

My Personal Philosophy of Advising is to see each student as an individual that has experiences and needs that can, and will, differ from their peers. While each student comes to their advisor for answers, I hope the experience my students receive is informational and relational. I hope they feel validated in their decision to add pursuing an education to their plate, and I hope they know they have a supporter in their corner.

Thanks for reading.

-Susie