

The Institute for Learning and Teaching

Advising Professional Development Task Force



Key Question: What are the competencies we want to support and develop in our advisors?

Communication Skills

- Interpersonal communication
 - Listening: willingness to sit and listen to students
 - Speaking
 - Paraphrasing
 - Summarizing
 - Using questions
- Empathy: willingness to understand the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of students
- The ability to build coalitions across campus, which requires
 - Recognition of the key offices that serve students
 - Establishment of working relationships with those offices
- The ability to build relationship with advisees and to use developmental advising in advising sessions

Institutional Knowledge

- AUCC requirements
- Major requirements, including the prerequisites and the semesters in which classes are offered or not offered
- Graduation requirements (e.g., upper-division credits, course in-residency requirements)
- Key dates for registering for classes, dropping classes, and withdrawing from classes
- DARS
- Procedures for documenting advising sessions
- Registration procedures
- Late withdrawal procedures
- Override procedures
- Procedures for credit overloads
- Procedures for waiving requirements
- Procedures for making course substitutions
- Procedures for repeating/deleting courses
- Awareness of Web-based resources, such as the Course Applicability System, the Registrar's site for repeat/delete information and appeal processes, and the Division of Student Affairs
- Knowledge of how to use RamWeb (Aries/Banner), including awareness of what students will see on the site and how to use the advising tools
- Knowledge of institutional resources, such as CASA, Office of Student Conduct Services and Conflict Resolution, Career Services, Resources for Disabled Students, Advocacy Offices, etc.
- Understanding of legal issues associated with advising (e.g., FERPA)

Understanding of Student Development

- Awareness of the wide range of ways of thinking exhibited by students, often characterized in terms of Meyers-Briggs type personality factors or right/left brain tendencies
- Awareness of the impact of different learning styles on student success and persistence
- Awareness of theories of cognitive development and of the use of taxonomies of difficulty and cognitive engagement (e.g., Bloom's Taxonomy)
- Awareness of transition theory
- Awareness of the impact of factors such as
 - Being a member of an ethnic minority on a majority-dominated campus
 - lifestyle choices (e.g., drug and alcohol use)
 - learning disabilities
 - socioeconomic background
- Awareness of concerns related to special populations such as
 - First-generation students
 - student-athletes
 - international students (particularly non-native speakers of English)
 - Honors students
 - Key Academic Community students

Application of Institutional Knowledge and Development Theory

- Ability to look critically at the classes a student proposes to take in a given semester (e.g., the "4 year plan") and make suggestions for other classes that might be more appropriate in order for that student to successfully graduate in four years
- Ability to assess the difficulty level of a course schedule (looking at individual courses and the course schedule as a whole) and determine whether the student is likely to be successful with that schedule (particularly important for "at risk" students)
- Ability to make judgments regarding student needs and to direct students to relevant resources, support groups, and opportunities, such as CASA, Resources for Disabled Students, the Learning Assistance Center, the University Counseling Center, and the Career Center.
- Ability to make judgments regarding student skills and abilities
- Ability to make recommendations, based on knowledge of a student's interest in a career, on appropriate classes and extra-curricular activities
- Ability to guide students to explore options, such as other majors or careers, that would fit with their skills
- Ability to recognize one's own "way of thinking" and leaning style, and to avoid assuming that advisees think and learn in the same way

Fostering Student Academic and Professional Growth

- Ability to provide students with the information needed to develop a "four-year plan" for graduation, and to help students understand how to modify that plan as needed
- Ability to require students to take responsibility for their own learning and professional growth (e.g., requiring students to bring their four-year plans to advising sessions)
- Ability to help students develop the judgment to determine whether they are performing well in a course
- Ability to help students learn how to recognize and address problems on their own
- Ability to help students explore career possibilities within the context of their major
- Ability to help students explore possible mismatches between their career interests and major