One-to-One Teaching and Advising: Developing Effective Relationships With Students

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This session will consider...

What those advising students need to do and be in order to establish more meaningful, effective, and rewarding advising relationships.
Advising Issues at RIT

- Academic interventions, early alerts
- Communicating academic standards to students
- Role of professional and faculty advisors
- Building partnerships with faculty
- Strategies for outreach to students
- Strategies for working with at-risk students
- Assessment
- Others??
There are within us seeds of who we might become.

Thich Nhat Hanh
There comes that mysterious meeting in life when someone acknowledges who we are and what we can be, igniting the circuits of our highest potential.

Rusty Berkus
The more interaction students have with faculty and staff, the more likely they are to learn effectively and persist toward achievement of their educational goals.
Increasing Concern for Students

- The ideal of a faculty that is more attentive to students is a rising priority on many campuses
- Increased interest in undergraduates
- Easier for students to see faculty outside of office hours
- Increased faculty interest in students’ academic and personal problems

*The American College Teacher*
UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, 2002
Teaching includes any experience in the learning community that contributes to individual or community growth and development....

Professor Burns B. Crookston
University of Connecticut
“Advising as Teaching.” 1972
Although faculty are formally designated as teachers, there are many circumstances where others in the campus community are also teachers.

Professor Burns Crookston, University of Connecticut
I assumed the that the most important and memorable academic learning goes on inside the classroom. The evidence shows the opposite is true.

When we asked students to think of a specific critical incident or moment that had changed them profoundly, four-fifths of them chose a situation or event outside the classroom.

Richard Light, Harvard University
Making the Most of College, 2001
2005 National Student Satisfaction Report
Conducted by Noel-Levitz, Inc.

- 389 and four-year private institutions
- 267,140 students responded

What do students expect from their colleges?
National Student Satisfaction Report
Four-year Private Institutions

1. Instructional effectiveness (6.31)
2. Academic advising (6.25)
3. Safety and security
4. Registration effectiveness
5. Recruitment and financial aid
6. Student centeredness
7. Concern for the individual
8. Campus climate
9. Campus support services
10. Service excellence
11. Campus life
12. Responsiveness to diverse populations
Goal B3

Effective and easily accessible academic support and advising will be available to all students.

RIT Strategic Plan 2005-2015
Increasing student persistence is a continuing concern in higher education...
RIT’s academic weaknesses include....

Lack of a comprehensive institutional approach to retention and graduation of students....

RIT Strategic Plan 2005-2015
No student service is mentioned in retention research more often as a means of promoting student persistence than academic advising.

*The Strategic Management of College Enrollments*
Hossler and Bean, 1990
Institutions are far more likely to attribute attrition to student characteristics than they are to attribute attrition to institutional characteristics.

*What Works in Student Retention, 2004*
Some institutions seem to be more effective in helping students from a wide range of abilities and backgrounds succeed in college. [They] recognize that what students bring to college is less important than what they do when they get to college.

How College Affects Students
Pascarelli & Terenzini, 2005
There is a relationship between advising and student retention. (n=197)

Strongly agree/agree 89%
Disagree 3%
Neutral 8%

Teaching Professor Conference, 2005
There is a relationship between advising and student retention. (n=18)

Strongly agree 72% (13/18)
Agree 22% (4/18)

Survey of RIT Faculty, 2002
Relationship between advising and retention?

Without advising, students would be lost in the crowd....

Survey of RIT Faculty, 2002
Relationship between advising and retention?

I know the answer is yes, because the Retention Committee keeps telling me so; however, I believe that retention is related to the student having some tie to the institution.

Survey of RIT Faculty, 2002
RIT advising staff also play a vital role in advising our students, but they should not be expected to play a sole or even primary role.

Advising a responsibility of the faculty?

Faculty advising is our responsibility...

It can also be shared with others.

Survey of RIT Faculty, 2002
At colleges and universities committed to student success, academic advisors are partners with faculty and other staff in enhancing educational effectiveness.

Thinking DEEPLY About Academic Advising and Student Engagement,
George Kuh, 2006
Teaching and advising need to be part of a seamless process, sharing the same intellectual sphere, informed by a relatively consistent educational philosophy.

Robert M. Berdahl, Historian and President
University of Texan at Austin
“Teaching Through Academic Advising: A Faculty Perspective,” 1995
Good teachers communicate their ideas to students in a framework students understand.

They sense when they’re not getting through and then modify their approach.

*Giving Advice to Students*
Schein, Laff, and Allen, 1987
Elements of Academic Advising

- Conceptual
- Informational
- Relational
Relational Elements

- Interview Skills
- Communication Skills
- Rapport Building
- Referral Skills
- Decision-making process
- Multicultural Advising Skills (ethnicities, gender issues, disability issues, etc.)
Student Expectation of Advisors

Availability

Knowledge

Care and Concern
Establishing rapport...
Influence Theory

Why do we listen to others?

Where do we go for our information?

What influences our decisions?

Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953
Three Keys to Influence

1. Attractiveness
2. Expertness
3. Trustworthiness

Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953
Trustworthiness is based on the student's perception of the advisor's intentions; if there appears to be an agenda or vested interest, then there will be loss of trust.
The prerequisite skill in any helping relationship is effective empathic communication.

Good communication skills are key to developing a positive advisor/advisee relationship.

Peggy King, 1997
Advisors must listen and communicate effectively with their advisees. Such behavior skills builds rapport and makes advisees aware that the advisor cares about them…

Susan Barnett, Scott Roach, Martha Smith
“Microskills: Advisor Behaviors that Improve Communication with Advisees”
NACADA Journal, Spring 2006
Communication Skills

- Nonverbal Communication
When we think of communication, we frequently think only of verbal communication. Yet our nonverbal communication (gestures, appearance, expressions, environment) can be of equal or greater importance in terms of the messages we convey.

Peggy King, 1997
About 80% of communication is nonverbal, and when verbal communication is ambiguous we usually trust the nonverbal message. So skill in reading nonverbal communication is key. Even more important is awareness and control of our own nonverbal signals.

Arthur Chickering, 1994
Nonverbal Communication

Physical behaviors
- Smiling, frowning, laughing, signing
- Proxemetics
- Tone of voice
- Attitude, mannerisms

Body language/attending behavior

Preparedness for advising sessions

Physical environment
The advisee will be aware of the advisor’s body language, so the advisor must be aware of her or his body language.

Barnett, Roach, & Smith, 2006
S.O.L.E.R.

- Squarely face
- Open posture
- Lean toward
- Eye Contact
- Relaxed

Egan, 1998
Verbal Communication

Questioning
• Open vs. closed questions
• Clarifying questions
• Continuing (key word) questions

Reflecting and paraphrasing

Challenging and supporting

Effective listening
Listening exercise...
At the heart of advising is listening, the experience of being heard and accepted that enables growth and change.

Toler, 1999
How do educators help students to move beyond the questions they’ve been taught to ask?
HIERARCHY OF ADVISING

Life goals, values, abilities, interests, limitations

Vocational/career goals

Academic programs/Field of Study

Selection of courses

Scheduling classes

Terry O’Bannion, 1972
Some things we can say...

- Your major won’t determine your career or your success in life.
- Failure can be an important part of learning.
- Use criticism to strengthen your skills and abilities.
- Your academic past doesn’t always equal your academic future.
Some things we can say...

- Learning isn’t about grades it’s about developing the ability to think and solve the problems of life.
- Working harder won’t always bring success; learn to work smarter.
- *Making it* on the journey is sometimes easier when you travel with others.
- Faculty usually want you to succeed and will help you do so, especially when you ask.
Referral Skills

Students rarely turn first to professional counselors to solve their problems. Academic advisors, faculty [and others] are often seen by students as the logical first choice for advice and support.

Giving Advice to Students
Schein, Laff, and Allen, 1987
At high performing schools, the educational and personal developmental goals of advising are shared across multiple partners.

Faculty, student affairs staff, and professional advisors comprise multiple early alert and safety systems for students.

George Kuh, 2006
Do you know who (a name, phone number, etc.) to refer students to in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-op &amp; Placement</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support Center</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar's Office</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Financial Services (Bursar's Office)</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student Services</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math &amp; Science</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Center (Personal and Career Issues)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Behavioral Consultation Office</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Advising

Support Services

Services for Specific Groups

Orientation

Counseling

Assessment

Financial Aid

Registration

Retention

Career/ Life Planning

Learning Assistance

Instructional Faculty/ Programs

Specific Groups
Referral Skills

- Know how to refer and when
- Don’t refer too quickly
- Know referral resources
- Clarify reasons for referral
- Explain what referral resource will provide
- Refer to a specific person
- Assist in making the appointment
- Follow-up
Treating everyone the same may be equal treatment, but it may not be equitable treatment.
Quality interaction with faculty seems to be more important than any other single college factor in determining minority student persistence.

Levin and Levin
1991
Two thirds of RIT’s enrollment growth over the last five years has come from African American, Latino/a, Native American, Asian, and international student populations.

RIT Strategic Plan
Dispositional Barriers

- Undermining attributions
- Ego involvement

K. Patricia Cross
No amount of spending, curriculum reform, national testing, or learning technology will solve our education problem as long as teachers believe that the majority of students can’t learn.

Access Denied: Race, Ethnicity, and the Scientific Enterprise
Campbell, Denes, and Morrison, 2000
Page 30
Ability or Effort?

By the time students reach high school, they generally believe that ability is a relatively fixed, unchangeable capacity.

British Journal of Developmental Psychology
1983
Attributions

When something happens in life, to what do we attribute the cause?
Academic Achievement Attributions

- Ability
- Time and Effort
- Task Difficulty
- Luck

Bernard Weiner, 1972, 1977, etc.
Shift attributions from ability to background.

Students’ attributions and those of faculty and staff.
Dispositional Barriers

- Undermining attributions
- Ego involvement
Much of what can go wrong with achievement—e.g., irrational goal setting, overweening anxiety—is the product of ego involvement brought on by normative comparisons to others.

Nichols, 1978, 1984
0 – 100% Competence
Teaching/Advising Method

- Review student’s academic record and learning history, looking for strengths and weaknesses.
- Help student to define personal, educational, and career goals and skills needed to achieve these goals.
- Assess the student’s skill level in areas identified as essential to achievement (0-100%)

Mario Rivas, 1988, 1990
0 – 100% Competence
Teaching/Advising Method

- Establish competency level student will seek to achieve (0-100%).
- Identify curricular, co-curricular, experiential, and community learning experiences (strategies) that will enable student to develop skills.
- Review and evaluate progress toward goal achievement and skills development.

Mario Rivas, 1988, 1990
Dispositional Barriers

- Undermining attributions
- Ego involvement

K. Patricia Cross
Plurally Statically Appropriate Developmental Interventions

- Directive
- Concrete
- Tangible
- Responses to Immediate Needs or Problems

Brown & Rivas, 1994
Reaching out to students...
Intervention programs that depend on student-initiated contacts tend not to be used advantageously by at-risk students.
Academic services may be available, but if we wait for students to come for assistance, attrition may be the result. Students inexperienced in the ways of college—and certainly most first-year students—need to be reached out to with intrusive programs and services.

Levitz and Noel, 1989
Intrusive Advising

Intrusive advising does not mean “hand holding” or parenting. Rather, it does mean active concern with the student’s academic preparation and a willingness to assist them explore programs and service to improve their skills and motivate them to complete their program.
Developmental advising requires the establishment of a caring human relationship...wherein both parties take responsibility for sustaining the relationship but the advisor must take the primary responsibility for its initial establishment.

Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1982
Academic advising is assisting students to share the responsibility for academic planning with faculty, with students finally being able to find their own answers and use their advisors as sounding boards.

*Academic Advising for Student Success*

Susan Frost, 1991
Changing Environment & Changing Students

1st Year  2nd Year  3rd Year  4th Year

Need for Information

Need for Consultation

Moving In → Moving Through → Moving On

RIT  RIT/S  RIT/S  S/RIT  S
RIT = Faculty, advisors, etc.
S = Student

PRESCRIPTIVE → DEVELOPMENTAL

Lynch, 1989; Brown & Rivas, 1994; Creamer, 2000; Brown, 2006
Assessment in advising...
Federal Employee Evaluations

- He sets low personal standards and consistently fails to achieve them.
- If two people are talking and one looks bored, she’s the other one.
- Got a full six pack, but lacks the plastic thing that holds it all together.
- The gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn’t coming.
- The wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead.
Assessment in advising:

That which is important gets measured....

Robert Reich
Student affairs educators are (unfortunately) often evaluated on the basis of student satisfaction with their work, rather than [by] their success in advancing student learning and enhancing the student experience.

“Enhancing Professional Development”
Susan Borrego, Cynthia Forrest, Jane Fried
Learning Reconsidered 2, 2006
Learning organizations develop the capacity to gather feedback on their own effectiveness, absorb new information into the decision making structure, and compare the outcomes of their activities to espoused goals.

Borrego, Forrest, Fried, 2006
Advising Outcomes

- **Cognitive**: what is it we expect advisees to know?
- **Behavioral**: what is it that we expect advisees to be able to do?
- **Affective**: what will advisees come to value?
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