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My Advising Philosophy

Academic advising is about building relationships (i.e., with students, staff, faculty). I believe that good academic advising provides one of the only opportunities for all students to develop a consistent, ongoing mentoring relationship with someone at the college or university who cares about them. To build an effective and trusting helping relationship with students, I draw on good communication skills like empathy, active listening, and asking open-ended questions.

My role as an academic advisor involves focusing on the needs of students and involves helping students with personal, educational, and vocational decisions. In addition, it includes helping students develop self-awareness and skills in problem solving and evaluation. The advising relationship involves both movement and progression and goes beyond simply providing students with information. While I frequently answer students' basic questions and concerns about matters related to the curriculum and college policies/procedures, I believe that my role extends beyond these administrative tasks and entails helping students connect their strengths and interests with their academic and life goals. Working with students to set personal, educational, and career goals, helping them select a program of study, encouraging them to invest fully in curricular and co-curricular activities, monitoring their progress, assisting them with evaluating situations, helping them to manage transitions, and referring them to available campus and community resources are among my additional responsibilities as an academic advisor.

I believe in the holistic development of students, including helping students develop academically, personally, socially and intellectually. As an advisor, I want to actively engage students in their education and help students develop a sense of responsibility for their academic choices. Advising includes trying to strike the appropriate balance between challenge and support in the advising relationship. Academic advising keeps students stimulated, challenged, and progressing toward a meaningful goal. When I offer students too much support as an advisor, students may simply stop trying or even take advantage of the situation by not engaging at the level at which they are capable. If I challenge students beyond their capabilities, I may overwhelm them. When trying to balance the amount of challenge and support in my work with students, I must strive to get students to the point where they feel challenged to do their best, but feel supported to make mistakes.

I value a strong liberal arts education and believe that education is more than just preparing one for a specific job. Education must have a lasting value. College students need an education that will help them succeed in their work, in democracy, and in a globally diverse world. As an academic advisor, I speak with conviction about the important outcomes of a balanced curriculum in the liberal arts. I strive to help students understand the purpose and value of a liberal arts background and want them to

recognize the connections that exist across their coursework and how their classroom and co-curricular experiences will translate to their personal and professional lives beyond college. It is my desire that students realize that choosing a college major does not mean that one is tied to a specific career for the remainder of one's life. The possibilities, in fact, are endless.

As an academic advisor, I can help students realize how their coursework enhances their oral and written communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and their ability to interact with individuals who are not like them. I want students to appreciate that learning happens both in the classroom and through participation in extra-curricular and co-curricular experiences such as internships, study abroad opportunities, student organizations, campus activities, community service projects, and research projects. As a result, students begin to understand that learning takes place by talking about it, writing about it, relating it to experiences, and applying it to current issues and their own lives.

As students move through their college experience, career and academic advisors can work collaboratively to help students with strong liberal arts backgrounds in developing resumes and cover letters, conducting a successful job search, building a professional network, preparing for job and graduate school interviews, and connecting with alumni from the institution. In addition, advisors can provide students direction on how to reflect upon and synthesize the personal value and relevance of an education in the liberal arts and articulate their collegiate experiences in a way that gives meaning to their key transferrable skills. We can assist students in integrating the various parts of their education in an effort to demonstrate their learning and we can encourage them to relate the content of their courses to one another and to broader life concerns and their vocations.

I also believe that academic advisors play a vital role in making the college campus a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all students. I feel that it is important to treat every student as a unique individual with their own personal background, experiences, dreams, and goals and to advocate for all students, including students from underrepresented and marginalized groups.

I want every student to feel a sense of belonging and mattering. When students make the transition to college, they may initially feel like an outsider. Academic advising can help students immediately begin to feel a sense of belonging to the campus community and can make a positive impact on whether or not students decide to persist. Related to belonging is one's need to feel that one matters. Mattering includes knowing that others are personally interested in us and are depending on us and refers to one's belief, right or wrong, that he or she matters to someone else and that someone else appreciates him or her. Even with our differences, we find connection through the need to matter and the need to belong. When academic advisors help to create environments that show all students that they belong and matter this can lead to greater student involvement and students persisting to graduation.