



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



## A Review on academic advising concepts for higher education students

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### Abstract

The purpose of this review is to discuss different concepts regarding academic advising and its importance for higher education students. It is essential to understand the role academic advising can play in the progress of students, the legal and moral guidelines set to support this practice and the role of the students themselves in order to take full advantage of it.

**Keywords:** Academic advising; Advisor; Higher education; Advising ethics

### 1. Introduction

Academic Advising plays an essential role in the progress and success of higher education students. It provides them with the assistance they need in several aspects of their lives. The help given by the advisors extends beyond campus issues and studies to cover guidance in life decisions and career plans as well, which gives the students the assurance and confidence to pursue their goals in life.

According to the academic advising syllabus of the University of Akron, Academic advising is an intentional, collaborative, and ongoing partnership between students and therefore the university supported sharing accurate and timely information that permits students to navigate the tutorial system and to spot and reach educational, personal, and career goals. Faculty and professional academic advisers who are charged with advising-related duties establish an enticing and challenging learning and mentoring relationship which supports the mutual trust and respect of both parties<sup>1</sup>. The syllabus also goes on to outline the university's philosophy regarding academic advising mentioning that students are often unaware of the demands and expectations of the university and therefore need to learn the culture of higher education. Academic advising plays a key role in their understanding of the collegiate environment and that academic advisers recognize and accept that all students are unique and enter the learning process at varying points, learn at different rates and through a variety of methods. At the heart of all academic advising is the development of an educational plan that will enhance intellectual and personal growth.

However, students often do not reap those benefits because of lack of encouragement or possibly lack of knowledge. This information can benefit current and future students' academic progress, it can also help shed some light on the changes required to improve and encourage the relationship between academic advisors and students.

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## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Academic Advising Approaches

Academic advisors follow multiple approaches to build a good relationship and guide their students through their journey. Advising approaches are not limited to the aforementioned models, more recent approaches include the learning centered paradigm which is more focused on the advisor's role as a teacher and the strength based advising where the focus is shifted to the student's abilities rather than his shortcomings.

The two main approaches followed:

- Academic advising is developmental advising and also it is both a process and an orientation. It reflects the idea of movement and progression and it goes beyond simply giving information or signing a form. Developmental academic advising recognizes the importance of interactions between the student and the campus environment, it focuses on the whole person, and it works with the student at that person's own life stage of development. It is grounded in theory, including cognitive developmental theory, psychosocial theory, and person-environment interaction theory, as well as in theories that focus on specific populations<sup>2</sup>.
- There is the intrusive approach which recognizes the unique needs of 'at-risk' students including those from ethnic or other minority groups, those students who are academically disadvantaged or on probation, students with disabilities, cognitive problems, or psychological issues which can interfere with academic success, or students from low-socioeconomic levels or with family or financial concerns<sup>3</sup>. This model of advising is action-orientated to involving and motivating students to seek help when needed. Utilizing the good qualities of prescriptive advising (expertise, awareness of student needs, structured programs) and of developmental advising (relationship to a student's total needs), intrusive advising could also be a direct response to identified academic crisis with a specific program of action. It is a process of identifying students at crisis points and giving them the message, 'You have this problem; here is a help-service.'<sup>4</sup>

### 2.2. Role of Academic Advisors

The faculty advisor has many roles and responsibilities when it comes to advising students. "Advisors are expected to share their knowledge of major and degree requirements, help students schedule their courses, and generally facilitate progress to degree in a timely manner"<sup>5</sup>.

To assist students in exploring career and educational opportunities.

- Become familiar with university academic policies and answer any questions students may have regarding these policies, regulations, programs, and procedures.
- To approve all designated educational transactions (e.g., schedule, change of major, waivers, graduation requirements), to monitor progress toward educational and career goals and help select courses at each registration period based on curriculum and University requirements.
- Refer students when academic or personal problems require intervention by other professionals and protect the privacy of student information as set forth in The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- Advisors can assist the student with virtually all aspects of the academic experience and provide information regarding campus resources as needed.
- Some of the specific responsibilities of academic advisors include but are not limited to: assistance with goal setting, assistance with personal growth and career development, assistance with personal concerns, assistance with Attendance, tardiness and time management, navigation within the campus environment and adjusting to College life.

### 2.3. Role of Students in academic advising

Academic advising can be explained the responsibility of the advisor to make contact with the student; however, it is just as much the student's responsibility to seek advising to further their academic success<sup>6</sup>.

- To assess the students realistically for their become academic, professional, and life goals.
- They must employ critical reasoning skills and able to examine the beliefs and presuppositions that constitute their views of self, their world, and their place in their world.
- Students must be taught to accept ownership of the decision-making process and to become creators of their experiences.
- Also to understand that advising is a collaborative partnership<sup>7</sup>

- Clemson University's website also mentions that students' responsibilities include: Seeking assistance from his/her advisor if the student wishes to change/declare his/her major.
- To make an appointment with the assigned advisor prior to registration. To come to the advising session should be attend with appropriate resources or materials and should be well-prepared when attending the advising session.
- Also to engage in an active dialogue with the advisor and follow through on next steps identified during each advising session.
- To be aware of his/her academic standing at all times and the important dates and deadlines on the academic calendar so such as drop/add days. As well as accepting final responsibility for all decisions.
- It is important for students to have a sense of responsibility, accountability and diligence in order to have fruitful relationships with the faculty advisors and grow in their lives and careers.

#### **2.4. Academic Advising Outcomes**

The good practice of academic advising can help with students' improvement in many ways. The advisor's guidance can enable them to achieve good results academically and take the first steps towards a successful career.

The Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) researches the actions, interventions and practices that will help the most students succeed. Many Studies shown the number of advisor meetings was a significant predictor of student retention. Furthermore, the findings support key elements of higher-education retention theories, specifically that student interaction, engagement, and involvement prove instrumental in keeping students enrolled. Academic advising become improved student outcomes, two of which are elements of: goal setting with an advisor; and alert and intervention.

#### **2.5. Ethics in Academic Advising**

It is imperative for advisors to conduct their advising sessions in an ethical manner, as it will protect both theirs and the students' rights and prevent any conflicts.

According to for any new advisor there are three continua along which moral behavior must be located<sup>7,8</sup>.

#### **2.6. Neutral vs. Prescriptive**

To occupy a position on the neutral side of this scale is to be reluctant to tell students what to do, preferring to let students discover the appropriate action with a little guidance. A neutral adviser will patiently provide information to help students decide on a course or a major, but will draw the line at making a recommendation. A prescriptive adviser sometimes using their authority of the position to make the recommendation stick. Both positions, if taken to the extreme, can be dangerous to students.

#### **2.7. Encouraging vs Discouraging, (optimistic vs. being cruel to be kind)**

In the encouraging, advisers only give positive messages to students by his way. Such advisers would never criticize students also lest they become discouraged, didn't give bad grades. On the other discouraging, advisers only look for negative consequences and relish every opportunity to chastise.

#### **2.8. Judgmental vs Nonjudgmental**

This tension only exists within the adviser, not in the interaction with students. You can either form judgments or not, or be somewhere in between. To be nonjudgmental is to accept without criticism what students say; to be judgmental is to not accept anything without subjecting it to scrutiny.

Without the emphasis on ethics, organizations can miss the opportunity to reinforce responsibility for their internal and external environment. This failure can lead to an outcry of negative public opinion, or even worse, legal issues. The measure of ethical success within institutions of higher learning has always been important<sup>9</sup>.

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### **3. Conclusion**

It is generally agreed on that academic advising has positive influence on students, however there are many approaches to be followed and several issues to consider when advising a student. Thus it's of prime importance to gain that knowledge and be well informed of all the recent theories and strategies. Although many articles on academic advising have been published over the years, not all questions regarding the topic have been answered. More attention should be paid to the ways academic advising is conducted at higher education institutions in order to

achieve positive results and help students reach their goals. The relationship between academic advisors and students is very important. It has the potential to help students grow academically as well as personally.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

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There is no conflict of interest.

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