Beyond Foundations: Developing as a Master Advisor

Chapter 3 - Building upon the components of academic advising to facilitate change

Reader Learning Outcomes

Readers will use knowledge gained about master academic advisors to:

- Understand the informational, relational, and conceptual
- Comprehend components of academic advising;
- Identify and explain organizational models of academic advising;
- Recognize master advisors as meaning makers;
- Know strategies for reaching across perceived divides in the academy; and
- Facilitate change that enhances student persistence through graduation.

Aiming for Excellence discussion questions and activities

Components of Academic Advising

- Discuss with colleagues the items of little-known institutional information that upon revelation would make the biggest difference to students and other advisors. Then brainstorm ideas for creating access to these nuggets of information.
- Read a chapter in *Academic Advising Approaches: Strategies That Teach Student to Make the Most of College* (Drake et al., 2013) and then discuss with colleagues ways to incorporate the highlighted strategies into advising practice.
- Find the definition for campus advising or a mission statement and discuss them with colleagues. Specifically, address the ways current advising practice mirrors (or not) the definition or mission. If neither a definition nor a mission statement exists, discuss the elements to include in drafting a definition and mission statement.
- Refer to the Question Types resources on the Communication and Listening page of the NACADA Clearinghouse (2014b) and answer the following questions:

    o What questions build relationships with advisees? For example, what inquiry leads to discovery of students' backgrounds? Their goals? Gaps in their knowledge about the institution?
    o What tips, based upon the question types, would you suggest to colleagues to help them craft academic advising questions that elicit enlightening responses?

- Read chapter 6 by Karen Archambault and discuss with colleagues the ways in which advisors' personal backgrounds differ from those of their students.
- Discuss whether, like McClellan (2007), advisors believe that understanding their own personal backgrounds should be considered a stand-alone component of advising? Why or why not? What preconceived notions (conscious or unconscious biases) does each advisor bring to advising conversations?
- Do you agree with McClellan (2007) that technology should constitute a stand-alone component of academic advising? Which of the commonly used technologies are the most helpful? Which are the least effective? What other technologies would be helpful to advising practice?

Organizational Models of Academic Advising

- Answer the five questions regarding the structure and delivery of advising: Who advises? Who is advised? Where is advising done? How are advising responsibilities divided? (Miller, 2012) and When is advising done? (Barron & Powell, 2014). Does your campus use a single advising model or do several advising organizational models exist on campus?
- Determine the benchmarks used at the institution (e.g., campuses used for assessment comparisons). How does the advising structure compare at your institution to the organizational models used on the benchmark campuses? What aspects of other models would help make advising more effective on your campus?
- Read the Klepfer and Hull (2012) study that delineates three predictors of student success: advising, completion of higher math, and passing AP/IB courses. Does academic advising practice or organizational structure dissuade students from persisting to completion? What (if anything) needs to change in the ways advising is accessed and delivered to correct the problems?
- Where advising is a shared responsibility, how do advisors communicate and learn about practice? Do advisors share a common philosophy about practice? Should they?
- If changes need to be made to the current advising organizational model, use Marsha Miller's (2004) 16 factors for (re)structuring academic advising to start conversations about the current status of academic advising on your campus.

Making Meaning

- What strategies are most effective for helping students determine their own values?
- How do you help students discover their potential, purpose, and passion? What activities are the most effective?
- Take a look at the NACADA Clearinghouse goal-setting resource. Which goal-setting strategies have you used? Select a strategy new to you and try it with students. Reflect on the approach that worked especially well with students.
- Choose one of the articles in the Joe Cuseo collection at the University of Wisconsin (2015) web site of academic resources as a common reading. Discuss with colleagues the insights learned from the featured topics.
- Discuss with colleagues the institutional insights you have learned from students and identify those insights best shared with administration. Determine a way to articulate the insights to facilitate needed changes.

Reaching Across Divides

- Identify thought leaders who consistently reach across campus barriers to accomplish initiatives or effect change. Invite those individuals for coffee and discuss ways they facilitate cross-campus conversations.
- Volunteer to serve on a campus committee or task force that is outside your typical duties or area of expertise. Use the opportunity to garner different perspectives regarding campus issues.
- Revisit the mission, vision, and goals of academic advising. How is academic advising defined on your campus? If it is time to write or revise these statements, form a committee using strategies suggested in this chapter.
- Enlist assistance from a senior administrator known for reaching across campus. Ask that administrator to address an advisor training session or task force meeting to discuss successful strategies for working across campus culture divides.

- Hold a brown bag lunch to discuss the Klepfer and Hull (2012) study and how campus entities can work together to facilitate student success.

Facilitating Change

- What student (and institutional) needs are currently met by the current advising system? What needs are not being met? Look at Miller's (2004) 16 factors to consider when (re)structuring academic advising and discuss issues identified with your colleagues.
- What problems can be addressed fairly quickly at minimal cost?
- Select one issue that needs to change on your campus. Ask individuals who can make the change happen to formulate plans.
- Identify colleagues who are ready to act and who are resistant to change.
- Identify skeptics whose opinions hold the most sway on campus. What can be said or done to bring at least one of these skeptics on board for your project?
- Read chapter 10 by Chrissy S. Davis Jones on leading from your position. What strategies will help you facilitate changes?
- Construct a plan to facilitate change and present it to an administrator whose backing will be influential.

Assessment Strategies

- Ask readers to identify the category of Learning Outcomes described within the chapter that interested them the most.
- Choose at least one Aiming for Excellence activity related to reader's named favorite topics. Facilitate implementation of the activity with readers, and together identify at least three possible changes that can result from completing the activity. Follow up three and six months later to determine the progress that has been made.
- Determine if change followed from the activity chosen. If changes have been made, assess whether they led to positive outcomes and determine other plans that may stimulate further positive action.