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Integrating Group Advising into a Comprehensive Advising Program
Becky Ryan, 2009 NACADA Summer Institute Faculty Member

Advising is a multifaceted profession with a multitude of personalities, perspectives, philosophies, and needs. It should be no surprise then that there is much variety in how we define our roles and design our programming. While there may be much discussion among advisors regarding the "what," "why," and "how" of advising, there is agreement on one point: there is a greater demand for advising than there are advisors to meet it. That, combined with the very real economic challenges facing most institutions and growing advising caseloads, finds advisors considering alternative ways to meet student needs. One popular approach for dealing with this challenge is group advising.

Often the most cost effective methods of academic advising can be delivered via group methodologies. The use of multiple delivery methods offers additional ways for meeting student needs as well as increasing student retention. Nutt (2000) noted that using groups in advising also offers the advantage of connecting "students to a peer group and a mentor. These connections are invaluable in establishing a student's sense of belonging to the institution" (p. 235). Nevertheless, group advising presents unique challenges for advisors.

Working with Students in Groups
Group advising should not be a phenomenon driven solely by expediency. Much has been written about the positive nature of using groups. Richard Light (2001) stated that "to learn from one another, students with different backgrounds and from different racial and ethnic groups must interact" (p. 190). Group advising may have a strong normative influence. That is, it has the potential to bring students on the extreme of various continua toward a safer middle ground on attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding their education. Especially with first-generation college students, there is a tendency to have extreme attitudes toward educational goals: extreme vocationalism, extreme individualism, or extreme disengagement. Group advising provides these students with the opportunity to interact with students who have less extreme viewpoints, listen to their questions, and view their interest in learning about academic options. This can provide a positive experience that can never be achieved within individual advising sessions. "Students who participate in group advising appreciate the opportunity to interact with peers as well as with an advisor. The feeling of not being alone is a powerful by-product of the group experience" (King, 2000).

Whether the decision to use a group approach is driven by necessity, content, variety, or the need to build community, group advising, when done well, can offer an excellent addition to the advising "tool box" of programming. The "advising as teaching" model logically connects to working with groups. Certainly, many advising events lend themselves ideally to a group process: orientation, freshman seminars, capstone courses, freshman interest groups (FIGS), learning communities in residence halls, pre-enrollment meetings, and common reading discussions, to name a few.

In Search of Inspiration in Our Own Backyard

Jayne Drake, NACADA President
Kathy Stockwell, NACADA Vice President

We wracked our brains in search of just the right pithy opening quote for this article to dazzle you. We pored over past issues of *Academic Advising Today* in search of what previous NACADA leaders have had to say to the membership at this point in the year. We traveled far and wide in search of the most genial, awe-inspiring stories calculated to warm your heart and renew your sense of purpose. We even called upon the muses to shower their inspiration upon us. And while we did, indeed, find glimmers of inspiration in these sources, it soon became clear to us that what we neglected to do was to peer into the most obvious place of all—our own backyards.

In America's post Civil War Gilded Age, the famous orator, Baptist minister, and founder of Temple University, Dr. Russell Conwell, delivered a speech entitled "Acres of Diamonds" over 6,000 times to audiences around the world. In it, Conwell tells the story of a wealthy farmer who is captivated by the promise of enormous wealth—acres of diamonds—if he will but search for it. His quest led him away from hearth and family to journey the world in pursuit of this treasure. After years of relentless searching, he died a penniless, ragged, and disillusioned old man, unaware that the diamonds and untold wealth he sought were just beneath his feet on the farm that he had abandoned years before. For Conwell, the message was clear: we need search only within ourselves to discover immensely rich resources, our own diamonds—those of courage, adaptability, resiliency, resourcefulness, and the capacity to live up to our potential. These qualities build character, and from character, he asserts, comes greatness. "Greatness consists not in holding some [grand] office; greatness really consists in doing some great deed with little means, in the accomplishment of vast purposes from the private ranks of life. That is true greatness." It was on this foundation of doing great things with little means by using the diamonds within all of us that Temple University was built. It occurs to us that, perhaps more than ever with the many pressures and exigencies we all face in higher education in general and academic advising in particular, Conwell's words continue to strike true.

We would also like to think that NACADA's diamonds are our members whose work every day in their offices or advising settings around the world inspires our students to unlock and discover the resources within themselves. Does our rhetoric sound a bit overblown? Perhaps it is. But the reality is that professional academic advisors and counselors, faculty advisors, and advising administrators make an important difference in the lives of our students. As we labor away—always hard and sometimes feeling isolated in our offices—we can lose sight of the fact that there are many thousand diamonds in our Global Community for Academic Advising who embrace our shared commitment to help others make their way, to help students both to navigate the academy, and to grow into satisfying careers.

It is especially your adaptability, resiliency, and resourcefulness, as well as your inspiration, that define and shape the work of the other brilliant diamonds in NACADA's backyard. Members of the Board of Directors, the Council, chairs of our ten regions, chairs of commissions and interest groups, chairs of administrative committees, advisory boards, and taskforces, and all those who hold leadership positions freely volunteer their time to promote quality academic advising, to provide opportunities for professional growth through the Association's institutes, conferences, and consulting and speakers services, and to offer Webcasts, print, electronic, and other resources to promote student success. The five goals of NACADA's Strategic Plan—1) champion the educational role of academic advisors to enhance student learning and development in a diverse world; 2) affirm the role of academic advising in student success and persistence, thereby supporting institutional mission and vitality; 3) anticipate the academic advising needs of twenty-first century students, advisors and institutions; 4) advance the body of knowledge on academic advising; and 5) foster the talents and contributions of all members and promote the involvement of diverse populations—assume life through the good work of these NACADA diamonds. And it is, of course, from you, our members, that we take guidance in order to ensure the current and future direction of the Association. We are grateful to you all.

And if we can stretch (and belabor) a bit farther the metaphor of our members as diamonds in our own backyard, then we have to acknowledge the many faceted and highly polished diamonds in our Executive Office. These amazing folks consistently have shown the savvy, adaptability, resiliency, resourcefulness, and just plain good sense that have built NACADA into a world leader among higher education associations. From the campus of Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas (the Little Apple), they work behind the scenes making sure that the pulleys and levers and bells and whistles are working as they should. Just to give you some sense of the extraordinary range of activities they are responsible for, we have inserted here a brief summary of their responsibilities from NACADA's Web site. "The Executive Office supports the association in all activities and provides services to the members. This includes implementation of all approved activities as designated by the Board of Directors. In addition, the Executive Office staff will maintain the Archives of the Association, act as the fiscal agent of the Association, provide Web services to all units of the Association, and lend expertise in meeting planning, contract negotiations,

Your Professional Development: The Key to Your Students' Success

Charlie Nutt, NACADA Executive Director

The role of academic advising in the lives of our students and in the health of our institutions continues to grow in value and respect. Whether institutions are analyzing their programs for first-year students, at-risk students, or students on probation; or preparing for regional or content area accreditation visits; or evaluating how best to use technology to enhance student learning and student connection to the institution, it quickly becomes apparent that academic advising plays a significant role in the success of these ventures. Administrators and institutional constituencies increasingly understand that academic advising touches every issue and must be a part of discussions dealing with students' success in reaching their academic, career and personal goals.

As we continue to deal with decreased funding and increased student numbers, the issue of student success grows more important to our administrators, our students, and our public constituencies. Because student success is so often measured by retention and persistence to graduation, it is essential that advisors and advising administrators continue to grow in our knowledge, talents, and skills through continuing professional development that will teach us how best to:

- utilize group advising as one way to manage the growing numbers of students with no increase in staff,
- utilize technology to better reach the "digital natives" in our growing freshman classes,
- build collaborative partnerships across campus to support student success,
- assess academic advising and determine student learning outcomes for advising,
- utilize the latest research in the field of academic advising and student success,
- build a culture of scholarship within the academic advising community on our campuses, and
- learn key strategies and techniques for advising students who present increasingly complex issues.

I strongly encourage you to attend our excellent professional development events, including one of our **Regional Conferences** (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/Events/Conferences/Regional/upcoming.htm*), one of our **Academic Advising Summer Institutes** (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/Events/SummerInst/index.htm*), and our **34th Annual Conference** at the Coronado Springs Resort at Walt Disney World in Orlando, October 3-6, 2010 (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/annualconf/2010/index.htm*).

However, I know that travel funds have been restricted for many. Therefore, it is essential that these travel restrictions not halt our professional development. Here are some great ways to continue to grow professionally and get the most out of your NACADA membership:

- Share this issue of *Academic Advising Today* with colleagues on your campus. Articles such as **Becky Ryan's** "Integrating Group Advising into a Comprehensive Advising Program" will stimulate conversations on how we can best meet our students' needs.
- Take advantage of one of the greatest member benefits, the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources*. Not only does the *Clearinghouse* provide members with

The Academic Advising Center: If You Build It, They Still Might Not Come

Terri Carroll, Gainesville State College

The scene: A college advising center on a campus where advising is not mandatory. The number of advising appointments during registration times vs. non-registration times, if plotted, resembles high frequency radio waves. Budgetary support for center services can be best described by the phrase, "Don't Ask. Don't Tell." Yet administrators have set strategic goals for student retention and graduation that feature advising in every action step.

Student advising centers are seen as accessible locations featuring professional advisors who facilitate student potential by assisting with educational plans and connecting students to campus resources – for the students who come. But what about the students who don't? Or those students who only show up during late registration?

Experience as the Director of Academic Advising at both a large, four-year research institution and a smaller state college has taught me that effective strategies for connecting with students can include collaborative programs, technological tools, and integrated advising modules. The key is to reach out and pull in students during non-peak periods when advisors and students have the time to actively engage in the process. Neither a big budget nor additional employees is required (although always nice). When student engagement incentives are in place for advising during non-peak times, quality advising opportunities multiply and strong student/advisor relationships develop.

At Georgia State University, a collaborative program between the Advising Center and Undergraduate Studies seeks to sustain students who have recently lost the HOPE Scholarship, a state program that pays full tuition and fees for students earning a minimum 3.0 GPA. Under the program, students receive a small stipend from scholarship monies in exchange for attendance at student success workshops, meeting with an advisor for a minimum of two appointments, and attending a training session for the online academic evaluation system. The program provides a strong incentive for students to actively pursue a relationship with an advisor and to engage in advising during non-registration periods.

An advising center that serves as a support system for an academic department can also pull in students during off-peak times. At Gainesville State College, nursing students are required to attend group advising workshops prior to registration. Students not attending these group workshops must sign up for advising appointments, view a video about the nursing curriculum, and complete an assessment rating their understanding of video content. In both cases, advisors answer questions, clarify nursing requirements, and initiate positive advising relationships.

Technology is another valuable tool for enhancing advising opportunities. Student information systems software can be programmed to act as a "mother hen," nagging students to seek advising. A 30-credit-hour registration hold at Georgia State requires students to view their online academic evaluations prior to being released for registration. The process is self-service and involves simple mouse clicks to view evaluations and release the registration hold. The Advising Center experiences an increase in appointments each time the 30-credit-hour hold goes into effect, the result of students coming face-to-face with their academic histories, number of hours earned, areas satisfied, and remaining graduation requirements.

A recent innovation at Gainesville State encourages advising, and not just registration, of students on academic probation by using self-registration as a reward for completing an Academic Success Plan (ASP). Probation students must register with assistance, and lines often snake around the Advising Center during registration periods. In-depth advising is sacrificed for the handing out of numbers, deli-style, and shouting "Next!" into the crowd. Instead, the ASP, a collaborative effort between student and advisor, is completed to release the student for self-registration. The ASP delineates needed cumulative and semester GPA's, documents referrals to campus resources, *e.g.*, workshops, tutoring, and personal counseling, and pairs problems with corresponding action steps. Course recommendations are listed on the ASP document, which is scanned into the computer system for future reference. Most students prefer the independence self-registration offers: this incentive encourages them to seek academic advising during the weeks prior to registration when adequate time, individual assessment, and developmental advising can better meet their needs.

Weaving academic advising into the more intimate classroom experience can bring additional opportunities to advance

Academic Advising: Ten Strategies to Increase Student Engagement and Retention by Personalizing the Online Education Experience through Online Human Touch

Kristen Betts and **Maria Lanza-Gladney**, *Drexel University*

Editor's Note: The following article was developed from a presentation given at the NACADA Annual Conference in San Antonio, October 2009.

Online education is now an integral part of higher education in the United States. Allen and Seaman (2008) reported that "online enrollments have continued to grow at rates far in excess of the total higher education student population, with the most recent data demonstrating no signs of slowing" (p. 1). Ambient Insight (as cited in Nagel, 2009) noted that nearly 12 million post-secondary students take some or all of their classes online, with more than 22 million students projected to take classes online in five years. Although online enrollments increase annually, student attrition in online education is reported to be higher than traditional on-campus programs, ranging between 20% and 50% (Diaz, 2002; Frankola, 2001) and even reported as high as 70% to 80% (Dagger & Wade, 2004; Flood, 2002).

To proactively address student attrition, Drexel University's online Master of Science in Higher Education (MSHE) Program has integrated Online Human Touch (OHT) into instruction and programming to engage students and personalize the online educational experience. Results include high student retention rates, high levels of student satisfaction, and active alumni engagement.

The OHT concept was developed and integrated into the MSHE Program in 2005. The OHT concept builds upon five research areas: (1) student engagement, (2) community development, (3) personalized communication, (4) work-integrated learning, and (5) data driven decision-making. The OHT concept asserts that students are more likely to persist in an online program if they (a) are engaged in and outside of their courses and (b) receive a personalized educational experience (Betts, 2008). This holistic approach begins with potential students during the application process and continues throughout students' enrollment to foster a lifelong bond with the institution.

The MSHE Program was launched in fall 2005 with a cohort of 26 students; enrollment has increased to 209 students in fall 2009. The overall student retention rate between fall 2005 and fall 2008 was 83%. Results from the 2009 MSHE Annual Student Survey reveal that OHT strategies engage online students and connect them to Drexel University. In fact, the data shows that MSHE students seek opportunities to become more connected to the University.

Results from the 2009 MSHE Annual Student Survey revealed that while MSHE students do not come to campus, OHT instructional and programming strategies connect online students to the faculty and the University. Over three-quarters of the MSHE students responding to the survey felt connected to the faculty and more than half felt connected to their classmates and the University. Personalizing the online educational experience is very important; a majority felt that faculty use of their names, in email and in Discussion Boards, along with the use of faculty photos, were important ways to bring the campus to them.

Building upon the OHT concept, the MSHE Program developed the Online First-Year Experience. Over three quarters of the surveyed students stated the Online First-Year Experience was important to student engagement and two-thirds said it was important to student retention. Although the Online First-Year Experience is optional, almost two-thirds of the students said it should be required. When asked which factors were most importance to the overall MSHE experience, students identified academic rigor of courses, instructional quality, academic support from faculty, quality of academic advising, and accessibility of the academic advisor as factors.

The role of the academic advisor is essential in creating a sense of community and connecting online students to the institution. Based upon the OHT concept, we suggest ten academic advising strategies to engage, connect, and retain online students.

1. **Online Open Houses:** Engage prospective students through online Open House events. This is an ideal venue

Planned Happenstance: Preparing Liberal Arts and Social Science Students to Follow Their Hearts to Career Success

Paula Landon and ***W. Kerry Hammock***, *Brigham Young University*

Editor's Note: The article is based on a presentation given by Paula and Kerry at the 2009 NACADA Annual Conference in San Antonio.

As advisors, we tell our liberal arts and social science students to "follow your heart" and "study what you love" in college. But, when it comes to career advising, how do we help these students "follow their hearts" to career success? Many liberal arts majors "love" so many different subjects they have a difficult time choosing a single career path. Other students do not know how to make connections between education and career choice. The career theory of "planned happenstance" provides direction for advisors to help students make connections and use developing skills and experiences to "plan" for "chance" career events.

"Planned happenstance" theory was introduced in 1999 by Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz. They clarified it as "constructing unexpected career opportunities" and purport that students can "plan," be prepared for, and even "construct" or generate "chance" career events in their lives. Advisors should recognize the underlying truth of this theory as many of us "happened" into advising as a career.

Because it can be used in addition to other career theories, some may argue that "planned happenstance" is not a theoretical model but a tool that assists students in development as they proceed in career decisions. When match theory or other career theories do not provide the impetus for decision-making, using "planned happenstance" can help the student generate career options and opportunities.

Our job is to not only help students plan and prepare, but also to construct, make meaning of, and capitalize on unplanned career events. When we work with students who cannot decide on specific details related to future careers, we are often at a loss as to what steps will help the student progress in the face of indecision. Advisors can apply planned happenstance to help students develop traits and skills and have experiences that will eventually make them desirable candidates in the competitive job market. By helping the student process and make meaning of these experiences and skills, the advisor directs the student toward decision-making when "chance" opportunities arise. As Pasteur stated, "Chance favors the prepared mind."

Students need to prepare for both "chance" career opportunities and unexpected career events that are consequences of the economy, the changing workplace, the global market place, or personal events. They begin by identifying skills and traits that will be important as they develop their cadre of experiences. Advisors assist students in defining methods to attain transferrable skills and employable traits through enriched learning opportunities: volunteering, part-time work, mentored research, internships, study abroad, student involvement, and leadership experiences. These skills, traits, and experiences will help students discover what is possible and how they can benefit a potential employer. The goal is to be in the "right place," at the "right time," with the "right tools."

Planned happenstance lists five traits students must develop to take advantage of opportunity: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and risk-taking. Advisors should work with students to encourage and reward the development of these traits. To help students develop the trait of curiosity, advisors should direct students to explore new learning opportunities that will teach them the process of defining their personal interests. As advisors encourage students to exert effort despite setbacks, this persistence may help the student reopen doors that may have been closed due to previous failure or premature decisions. Encouraging students to stay flexible in light of changing attitudes and circumstances will help them see, in new ways, things they may have been interested in previously or how things have changed. Also, as advisors encourage students to examine new opportunities as "possible and attainable," this optimism may generate new career opportunities. The advisor helps the student identify options, make decisions, and move forward. Rather than telling the student what is possible, the advisor's role is to help the student discover what is attainable. Advisors must be careful not to tell the student that anything is possible or to censor the student's dreams. This brings us

In the September 2009 edition of this publication, Theory and Philosophy of Advising Commission Past Chair **Jeffrey McClellan** discussed *What Each of Us Must Do to Advance the Field of Academic Advising* (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/AAT/ NW32_4.htm#1*). In this edition's **ADVISING ISSUES** section, Jeff's call for Thought Leaders is followed by a call for Advising Researchers. In the following three articles, the **Advisor as Researcher** is discussed and illustrated.

Locating the Academic Advisor Within the Creation of Knowledge

Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, NACADA Board of Directors and NACADA Research Committee member

"…every academic advisor is a potential researcher and . . . every researcher could profit from collaboration with practicing advisors" (Padak et al. 2005, p. 6).

Our universities and colleges share many commonalities, no matter the size of the institution or the levels of students served. Students enroll to achieve personal and academic goals. Faculty members engage students in activities that facilitate intellectual growth, and many within the institution focus on the production of knowledge through research. Various extra-curricular activities complement curricular activities and produce holistic educational experiences. Within this motion and interaction are academic advisors.

As academic advisors we interact with the entire campus community to communicate possibilities to students as they identify patterns and phenomenon that explain the world. But the majority of advisors never venture beyond this state of hypothesis to validate their knowledge, share it with other advisors, or use it to inform practice. Why?

The Study
A qualitative study conducted in 2008 by members of the NACADA Research Committee offers an explanation. A total of 92 NACADA members from across the ten NACADA Regions participated in focus groups to discuss the relationship between advisors and research. This descriptive study offered insight into this relationship. One key finding focused on confidence to conduct research. Even though advisors communicated many empirical questions that emerge from their advising practice, they identified a "lack of confidence" and insufficient training in research methods as factors that kept them from researching the answers to their questions (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2008). How does an advisor develop the skills needed to conduct research without participating in doctoral education?

Advisors work within educational environments that are filled with resources to help them gain research skills. In addition to resources available on their home campuses, there are other opportunities to understand the research process. Any advisor with curiosity and commitment is capable of developing and completing a study.

Suggestions that can help us as advisors develop our skills for inquiry and research:

1. **Never underestimate the value of reading.** Journals, such as the *NACADA Journal*, follow a peer review format to ensure valid methodologies for answering research questions. Articles follow a format that identifies the question (research problem), the research methods (methodology), findings (results), and implications for practice, policy, and future research. At the end of each article is a list of references which offer more resources to understand the research methods used in the study as well as delineate other research on the topic. Journals also offer reviews of recent research, called annotated bibliographies, that summarize what can be found in selected research articles. The recently published NACADA monograph *Scholarly Inquiry in Academic Advising* can help practitioners lay the foundation needed to answer their research questions.

   It is important to note that when we build the act of reading about advising research into our routines, we begin to identify the connections between questions and methodologies as well as identify the next step in a particular line of inquiry.

2. **Organize or join a research group.** Initially, this activity could replicate the NACADA Common Reading Program which is offered at the Annual Conference. The members of the research group select a group of journal articles to read and discuss. Discussion of each article should focus on the advising issue as well as the research methodology. Invite guest speakers from the faculty, Office of Institutional Research, or assessment offices to sit in on the discussions and offer insight into the quantitative or qualitative methodology found in articles. Participants should dialogue about questions that emerge from each article and discuss how these questions apply to the campus. Members of the group can initiate a literature review to understand the current research on the topic and then identify a research question the group will address.

   It is important to remember the adage that "Rome was not built in a day" when thinking about a research project.

3. **Look for opportunities to dialogue about research.** Strike up conversations with team members, advisors, colleagues in service agencies, and faculty members about the research project. This interaction might happen informally over lunch or in a brief conversation after a meeting. Create a more formal venue for this discussion by inviting an outside facilitator who understands the research process to talk to the research group. Attend a NACADA Research Symposium that provides a structured setting to discuss the research process as it applies to each participant's research

What Millennial First Year Students Want and Need from Academic Advisors

Gerrit W. Bleeker, Emporia State University
Martha M. Bleeker, Independent Researcher
Barbara Bleeker, Emporia State University

Editor's Note: The following article was developed from a presentation given at the NACADA Annual Conference in San Antonio, October 2009.

The Problem

College students born after 1981 often feel special and more entitled than previous groups of students. Sheltered and praised by parents and authority figures, these students, often described as *millennial students*, also tend to be conventional, goal-orientated, high-achieving and confident, prefer to work in teams, and report high levels of pressure to succeed (Gleason, 2008; Howe & Strauss, 2003). Academic advisors in the Emporia State University (ESU) Student Advising Center (SAC) were interested in investigating whether the millennial students at ESU fit these characteristics, and, if so, what changes could be made in the way first-year students are advised.

Method

To ascertain what our millennial students wanted and needed from academic advisors, we designed a twenty-three item questionnaire that first-year students completed during the first advising session of their second semester in February 2009. Advisees were asked to report on: (1) sources of academic advice and support; (2) the use of study strategies and study groups; (3) time spent studying, working, socializing, and surfing the internet; (4) parents' involvement in academic decisions; (5) frequency of advisor meetings; and (6) helpfulness of the goal-setting process and Student Advising Center packet.

The survey results reflect how our students' needs and approaches compare with those of typical millennial students and suggest areas for change in our present advising practices. Following is a summary of survey data which influenced changes we made in the way we advise first-year students.

Results: Survey results impacted three major areas: advisor training, advising materials, and advisee goal setting.

Advisor Training

Advisor training for first-year students clearly needs to include a discussion of typical millennial student characteristics as well as an overview of our survey results in order to help advisors learn about our students. The results of our survey show that 40.7% of students work, and 32.7% of those working spend 21-30+ hours on the job. Most of our advisees (97.4%) report that attending class regularly is important or very important, and half (49.4%) find civic engagement or community service important or very important. Over a third of our students (38.6%) are not confident about their math skills and a similar percentage (36%) report that, after first semester, the areas they need to work on most are study habits and improving grades. Each of these results introduces new advisors to important advising issues.

Although 99% of students reported they trust their advisor's academic advice, it is clear that advisees also value parental academic advice. When asked if they trust parental advice about academics, 88.5% of students agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, when asked if they trust parental advice more than anyone else's, 59.3% answered maybe or yes. As a result of these findings, we now emphasize that academic advisors should validate parental support and advice while making sure advisees get the best advice they can from advisors.

When asked how many hours were spent studying each week, 38.2% of advisees reported spending 1-5 hours and 41.2 % reported spending 6-10 hours. Meanwhile, more than half of our students (54.2%) spent 1-3 hours on Internet activities unrelated to school, and 30% spent 4-6 hours on the Internet. Advisor training and development now devotes more time to helping students develop time-management skills and study strategies for college coursework.

Advising Materials

An important tool used in our advising center is our SAC PAC, which contains information for students such as an advising syllabus, graduation requirements, study tips, tutor opportunities, and on-campus services. The SAC PAC is given to advisees during their first advising session. Knowing that millennial students are very comfortable with technology, we wondered if they would be interested in accessing the SAC PAC on-line. A majority of students (74%) indicated they would use an on-line version, so we now supplement the original SAC PAC with an on-line version [*www.emporia.edu/sac/sacpac.htm*] and encourage students to share it with their parents.

When asked if there might be additional information they would like included in the SAC PAC, the two most common responses were information about majors and minors, and information about campus activities. Since our university undergraduate catalogue is on-line, we have included this Web site in a list of several important sites recommended for student access. This provides students with immediate information about all majors/minors offered at our institution. Also included on our list is the Web site listing all campus organizations and information about organizations specifically related to a major.

Academic Diction: Using Clearer Language to Advise Effectively

Brad Molder, University of Arkansas - Fort Smith

Problem: In my previous position as an advisor in the Fulbright College Advising Center (FCAC) at the University of Arkansas, I often found myself answering the question, "So what are electives?" Out of curiosity, I tried to look up the definition for "electives" but didn't find the term defined anywhere in the University of Arkansas Web site or in the Catalog of Studies. While I discovered that the term was not defined anywhere on campus, I did find a few examples of electives in the Catalog of Studies:

- (College) Broadening Elective,
- Discipline-related Elective,
- University Core Elective (also listed under specific core areas such as Fine Arts),
- Freshman/Basic Science Elective,
- Free Elective,
- Professional Elective,
- Upper Level Area: Elective, *e.g.*, Arts, Science
- Advanced Level Elective,
- General Education Elective,
- Elective Courses in Conference (or Consultation) with advisor,
- Exemption Elective,
- Approved Elective, and
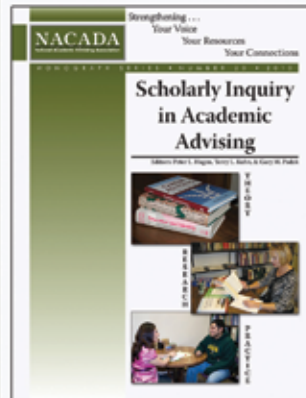- Required Electives.

Not only were there more than a dozen uses of the term in completely different contexts, there also was a term that is an oxymoron: required electives. By the time I finished trying to find a definition, I wasn't clear on the meaning of the term! I decided that a quick study of student understanding of the tem was in order.

Method: Using Google Docs, I created an informal survey with three questions:

1. "What does the term 'elective' mean?"
2. "How confident are you in your understanding of the term 'elective'?"
3. "Where did you learn about the term 'elective'?"

The first question was open ended. The second used a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 as "Very Confident," and 5 being "Not Very Confident." Finally, the third question gave six multiple choice options: 1.) Advisor; 2.) Peer/Fellow Student; 3.) Catalog of Studies or University of Arkansas Web site; 4.) Faculty, Instructor, or Graduate Teaching Assistant; 5.) Other Administrative Person; or 6.) Other, which contained an open entry blank for students to enter their response. Students then were given access to the survey via Facebook© (*www. facebook.com*), with the request that only undergraduate students from the University of Arkansas respond.

Results: The majority of respondents indicated that they understood that *electives* include those courses which are not specifically required. These students described *electives* as: "free choice," "optional—you get to choose," and "not required to pertain to your major." Two-thirds of the respondents reported that they were "Confident" or "Very Confident" in their understanding. However, these responses were not entirely accurate. In the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, the term *elective* is applied to three types of courses. First are General Electives, which represent the category above. They are courses not specifically required, but are necessary to help a student accrue the minimum hours needed for graduation. Most students understood what these were. Second are Major Electives. A good example can be found in the requirements for the Communication BA, which requires four specific courses and eight Communication Electives. Only a few students understood what these Major Electives were. Finally, there are Program Electives. These are courses taken toward a minor (many minors do not have specific course requirements) or for a pre-professional program that recommends, but does not require, certain kinds of courses. Virtually no students showed awareness of these electives.

Discussion: The bottom line for advisors is that students can benefit from having a set of standard definitions made available. Also, students might benefit from seeing and hearing the terms applied more specifically and consistently. For example, using terms such as General Electives, Major Electives, or Program Electives in communication (person, print, or electronic) with students could help delineate the different forms of electives.

I proposed to our director that our office (FCAC) add a section to our FAQ's Web site which defines and distinguishes the forms electives take. In addition, I proposed that our documents for incoming students include a definition of the term. Similarly, I proposed that the University of Arkansas include the definition in its future Catalogs of Studies.

Surviving the Semantics of Customer Service: Where Does It Fit Into Academic Advising?

John P. Updegraff, Auburn University

Advisors on many campuses have noticed a shift in the traditional student-advisor relationship so that students on many campuses now are treated as if they are clients in higher education. The use of "customer service" techniques in academic advising is controversial because of mixed perceptions regarding the definition of the word "service." Many advisors fear the adverse effects this shift could have on the student-advisor relationship.

The disagreement with customer service stems from the fear that the academe will turn into a business (Customer Service Survey, 2008). It would be naïve to state that business plays no role in higher education; however, advisors must examine our profession in a context relative to the roots of education. Simply put, colleges are not the same as businesses (Raisman, 2002). Academic advisors are not bankers, investors, or financiers, but we do provide a service to students. The division regarding customer service can be narrowed down to the definition of the word "service" as it applies to advising. It can be assumed that students would benefit from the use of some customer service techniques as they apply to institutional retention efforts and the offering of quality service to our students. But, it is the business connotation of "service" that is unpleasant to many advisors.

It is undeniable that we face a new breed of students who have new expectations of advisors. Today's students have been the recipients of targeted marketing their whole lives; they come to college quite savvy in consumer affairs (Raisman, 2002). Dorsey (2004) noted while many advisors accept "collegiate policies and procedures without question" and may be "satisfied with minimal advising services, . . . today's generation of students has different expectations" (¶ 2). Now, college students come to advising appointments with a "drive-through restaurant" mentality: they expect quick answers, quick service, and question institutional academic policies (Dorsey, 2004, ¶ 2). Current students perceive themselves as customers because they feel they are spending their valuable tuition money at our institutions. They expect quality service in return. If they receive satisfaction from the tuition they spend, it in turn makes their college experience more enjoyable (Demetriou, 2008). Contrary to popular belief, the customer is not always right in regard to the kinds of matters discussed with an advisor.

How do advisors meet the service expectations of students while remaining true to our student development roots? We must first reframe our view of current students. Students today are not the same as those from a decade ago. Acknowledging that student expectations have changed will allow us to make necessary adjustments to our advising techniques in regard to service (Dorsey, 2004). Advisors do not have to become customer service professionals with this acknowledgement; instead, this acknowledgement allows us to slightly modify the approach we take to the delivery of quality service.

Today's students expect to have a relationship with their institutions. They can connect through social organizations, academic clubs, intramural sports, or institutional personnel. Students judge the quality of their college experience by the quality of the relationships they make at the institution (Raisman, 2002). Academic advisors do not just handle academic matters, but also frequently serve as retention agents as we help students sort through issues. The level of service advisors provide is essential to college retention efforts, because advisors provide the "only structured service on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for on-going, one-to-one contact with a concerned representative of the institution" (Habley, 1994). While there is no clear answer to the question of how to serve our students better, the service we provide is the relationship we have with our students.

The traditional method for cultivating the student-advisor relationship does not have to change, even though students are changing. The way to serve students is as simple as treating them the way we would want to be treated. As long as advisors keep clear of the business connotation of the service provided, then the "philosophical underpinnings of our profession" will be preserved (Demetriou, 2008, ¶ 7). Fine-tuning our approach to the expectations of students through the use of advising assessment tools, such as satisfaction surveys, can help us collect feedback about how to improve service levels. Innovations such as online appointment systems, advising chat rooms, and the use of social media in advising have increased the accessibility students have with their advisors.

Simple advising techniques can also increase the level of quality service. The use of active listening and leading

In the following two articles, recipients of the **Wesley R. Habley NACADA Summer Institute Scholarship** share their experiences. Visit the following Web pages to learn more about the Institutes and scholarships:
www.nacada.ksu.edu/Events/SummerInst/index.htm
www.nacada.ksu.edu/programs/Awards/SIScholarship.htm

Sharing Our Passion for Helping Students

Jacqueline Wood, Wesley R. Habley Summer Institute Scholarship Recipient

In October 2008, I attended my first NACADA Annual Conference in Chicago. Sitting with 3,000 fellow advisors during the opening session, I could barely see the Leaders at the front of the giant room talking about the various ways to become involved in NACADA. Someone mentioned the **NACADA Summer Institute of Academic Advising**, and past attendees praised the Institute, the great work they did while there, and the wonderful time they had. I remember three specific thoughts I had that night: "I would love to attend a summer institute;" "I wonder if I'll ever have my picture on one of those posters out in the hallway;" and "someday I'd like to meet those people on the stage."

A few months later, I was perusing the NACADA Web site and saw a familiar place on the events page—Kansas City! A Summer Institute would be only a three hour drive from my house! With my fingers crossed, I completed a Summer Institute Scholarship application and submitted it. I knew if I received a scholarship that my school would be likely to let me go. My plan worked and before I knew it, I was at the Institute ready to begin my journey to becoming a better advisor.

When I looked around the room during the opening session, I saw around 100 advisors in attendance. I also saw several past and present NACADA Leaders who were going to be my teachers that week. That's when I realized this was going to be an intimate few days in which I would have an incredible opportunity to improve myself as a professional. During the first afternoon, I made great connections with people who were faced with the same advising issues I was and who shared my passion for helping students. By the time the first day was over, I was tired, but ready to work!

The next morning, we met with our Small Groups and began discussing our Action Plans. Some group members were charged with tasks from their supervisors, others had specific ideas they wanted to develop. Personally, I had so many ideas that I was not sure where to begin! With the help of others in my group and our fearless leader, **Jayne Drake**, I narrowed my focus to faculty advisor development.

The Small Group meetings became my favorite part of the Institute. We came from different institutions and each contributed our own unique perspective to the issues discussed. Not only did we share ideas, we also provided encouragement and support to each other. Being a part of this group made the

difference for me that week. This was the venue in which I was able to connect what was presented in the general sessions, topical sessions, and workshops to my own advising situation. In addition to my Action Plan, I brought back ideas for my first year experience course, advising exploratory students, peer mentoring, and more – and that was just from my Small Group!

The general and topical sessions offered each day were led by the Institute faculty. I was able to attend presentations that helped me further develop my Action Plan. The general sessions presented topics for all participants, *e.g.*, campus collaborations, theories of advising and how to apply them to our professional practice, why assessment is imperative and how to do it well, and how to be a change agent on our campuses. After getting fired up at the general sessions and Small Group meetings, we used the topical sessions to fill in the gaps and find ways to address our unique issues of concern.

Throughout the week, we attended several after-hours events. It quickly became clear that the Institute faculty were "party animals;" I was thoroughly impressed by their dance moves at a piano bar – up on the stage! On my last night, I went shopping and ate Kansas City barbeque with my new friends. It felt like we had known each other for much longer than four days; realizing that we were going home the next day gave me a nostalgic "end of summer camp" feeling.

On the final day, we each presented our completed Action Plans to our Small Group. I couldn't believe how much I had

Advising 2.0: Utilizing Web 2.0 Resources in Academic Advising

Brian French, The University of Montana-Missoula

The emergence and growth of Web 2.0 software has introduced various new methods for communication in academic advising. The days when communication technology tools were limited to the telephone and email are over as various campus departments experiment with Web 2.0 communication tools to supplement the more traditional means of reaching students. This article describes the basics of some of the more popular Web 2.0 software, discusses how academic advising efforts can be complemented by Web 2.0 tools, and offers suggestions on how to best implement Web 2.0 resources through effective campus collaborations.

Colleges and universities have made efforts to revise their communication strategies to more effectively stay connected with students. As students change their preferences for receiving information, institutions are faced with the challenge of adapting the ways they deliver information to these "digital natives." Colleges and universities are working to incorporate many of these Web 2.0 tools into their communication efforts. This can be a daunting process as academic administrators attempt to navigate the many options available, decide which software best meets the needs of their institution, and then attempt to coordinate implementation of new communication tools among the various offices affected by the change. However, the more prevalent these tools become within higher education, the easier it should become for other institutions wishing to utilize Web 2.0 tools effectively and efficiently.

Today's Options: blogs, social networking sites, wikis, and podcasts/vodcasts.

- **Blogs:** Blogs are "the central hub for any Web 2.0 communication implementation" (Stoller, 2009). Blogging software allows individuals who do not have advanced Web development skills to create Web sites on their own and easily update these sites with a few keystrokes. In an academic context, blogs can be useful for quick updates about upcoming deadlines, course offerings, tutoring availability, etc. Course instructors also find blogs very useful as supplements not controlled within course management systems such as Blackboard©. Blogs can also be very useful to repurpose content from one source to several other outlets through Real Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds that do not require advanced HTML coding knowledge.
- **Social Networking Sites:** *Facebook©* has emerged as the leading social networking Web site. A large percentage of college students use social networking sites such as *Facebook* and over 60% of students log in daily (Krieglstein, 2007). Many institutions are incorporating social networking into their communications with students. As stated by Esposito (2007), "*Facebook* is a tool for student self discovery and social development – two important aspects of students' college years" (¶14). Advisors have created *Facebook* groups and pages that allow students to voluntarily receive pertinent academically related updates through their individual *Facebook* accounts (Wright and French, 2009). While many institutions do not endorse third party communication vendors such as *Facebook* because of security concerns, several institutions have permitted the use of social networking for general student contact as long as it is not the official means of communicating with students.
- **Wikis:** Wikis are "web pages that can be viewed and modified by anyone with a web browser and access to the Internet" (EDUCAUSE, 2005). Wikis are used by campus departments for paperless communication and coordination. Meeting agendas, minutes, and vacation schedules are examples of information that can easily be coordinated and shared via wikis. Wikis not only save paper, but can significantly improve the efficiency of departmental communications. At the 2009 NACADA Technology Seminar, many presenters utilized wikis to share information and offered participants the opportunity to contribute even after returning to their home institutions.
- **Podcasts/Vodcasts:** The use of personal audio and video devices among college students has exploded. Podcasting and vodcasting allow users to easily download audio and video files onto their personal computers and transfer these files to devices such as iPods® or MP3 players to listen or watch the content at their convenience. Institutions utilize podcasting and vodcasting to record various presentations, class lectures, group and distance advising sessions, orientation offerings, and other academically related material that can help us "meet today's students where they live – on the Internet and on audio and video players" (EDUCAUSE, 2005).

Successfully Implementing Web 2.0 Tools in Higher Education: To successfully implement Web 2.0 tools within institutions of higher education, collaboration must happen between all involved campus departments. The sooner departments can collaborate with each other and with Information Technology specialists the more effective and efficient the implementation of the new software will be. Collaboration not only saves institutional resources but serves as an educational opportunity for those implementing the new technology tools to improve their programs.

Another important aspect to consider when implementing Web 2.0 tools within academic institutions is to include how these tools can be used in official campus communication plans. Developing written policy regarding how best to utilize Web-based communication tools helps garner support from institutional administrators and gives credibility to campus communications. Administrators then can encourage departmental exploration of Web 2.0 software for the improvement of communications with students. Including best practices procedures within communication plans guides users on how to take advantage of Web 2.0 tools.

This article provided the reader with a general description of how some Web 2.0 tools are being utilized in academic

Ten "Must Have" Tips for New (and Not So New) Academic Advisors

Erin Justyna, *Texas Tech University*
Rebecca Daly Cofer, *Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College*

Editor's Note: The following article was developed from a presentation given at the NACADA Annual Conference in San Antonio, October 2009.

It is sometimes said that we can't really train someone to be an advisor; it's just "learn as you go." While this has some validity, there certainly are things new advisors should know as they embark on this wonderful career path. The following list contains ten tips to ease the new advisor's transition into the field or to remind veteran advisors of the things they should keep in mind when working with new colleagues.

Tip 1: Observe experienced advisors and use them as a resource.

Advisors should not be afraid to ask for help from more seasoned advisors. Few situations are completely new; there will always be another advisor who has been through something similar. Even new advisors in "one person shops" can find mentors from another college who can offer new perspectives and unbiased advice through networking across campus, at conferences, or on the NACADA new advising professionals listserv (see *www.nacada.ksu.edu/Listserve/C40.htm*).

Tip 2: Remember That Advising is an Experiential Process.

"New advisors must realize that . . . the art of advising . . . is in large part learned in the advising chair" (Folsom, 2007, p. 13). Many advisors have little or no professional training when they enter their jobs. Advisors can use the resources available not only in their office, but across campus, and throughout the association. NACADA has a wealth of resources available to advisors online and at events. If an advisor sees a need for training from someone outside the campus, the NACADA Consultants and Speakers Service (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/AACSS/index.htm*) can provide assistance.

Tip 3: Set and Evaluate Professional Goals.

As a new advisor, writing in a journal can make it easier to articulate goals and gain motivation to take steps to reach those goals. Goals become a road map for the journey to excellence. Advisors should be careful not to just write down goals, but should take time to reevaluate the goals periodically and give themselves credit for goals they have attained.

Tip 4: Take Part in Professional Development Opportunities Whenever Possible.

Advisors should attend presentations available on their campus as well as local, regional, and national conferences. Memberships in state and national organizations give advisors access to resources that are otherwise unattainable (journals, online clearinghouses, etc). Advisors should challenge themselves to present and publish once they have joined these groups, starting small and working up to greater involvement. Creating and continually updating a professional portfolio is also a great way to develop and measure progress. (Find out more about professional portfolios in the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* at *www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/portfolio.htm*).

Tip 5: Know When, Where and How to Refer.

"Seldom do new advisor training programs address the art of referral" (Jordan, 2007, p. 86). Advisors need to acknowledge their own limits and create partnerships across their own campuses. Even the most seasoned advisor should not be afraid to send a student somewhere else for help. Effective referrals help students develop self-advocacy and awareness as they obtain the most valid information (see *www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Links/Refer.htm* for referral tips).

Tip 6: Advisors Must Take Care of Themselves.

One advisor can't do everything. Take a lunch, leave work in the office, and build breaks or down time into the schedule. Don't wait for special occasions; take time to celebrate the little things.

Tip 7: Find a Niche Within the Office.

There is more to advising than helping students plan their class schedules. Brochures, newsletters and presentations must be created, Web sites need to be maintained, research on changing student populations must be undertaken, and assessments must be done. New advisors who volunteer for these crucial tasks make themselves invaluable.

Tip 8: Stay Positive About Students and Advising.

Advisors often receive notes of affirmation from students and coworkers; they should place these notes in their professional

ACADEMIC ADVISING
VANTAGE POINT

Student Lies: A Time to Be Concerned

Amber Schuler, Purdue University-Calumet

Student: "Omigosh, I missed my appointment the other day because I was so sick. I had a 103 degree fever, and my eyes were watering, and I was throwing up all afternoon, and my leg fell off; I had to call my mom, who called my aunt, who sent my cousin to help me find it. But I'm better now and just have a little cough. *coughcough*"

As academic advisors, we have heard our share of wild and outrageous excuses for missed appointments and missed classes. However, within the last few semesters, it seems to me there has been a marked trend upward in the frequency and intensity of these exaggerated stories. As an advisor, I am concerned when I hear these lies. For some students there seems to be a clear disregard for truthfulness along with a lack of ownership and responsibility for their actions. I find this frightening.

Most students have enough integrity to suffer the consequences for missed appointments and skipped classes. However, there are a handful of desperate individuals who use embellished lies as excuses. For example, there always seems to be a flood of apocalyptic proportion, illnesses that border plague, and abominable snow beasts who appear around midterms and finals. What would push a student to use such exaggerated excuses?

A variety of reasons and situations come to mind: lack of preparedness, laziness, too much Guitar Hero, or just not enough maturity to handle college at the moment. The fact remains that we are their advisors, and they are telling us these huge falsehoods. In other situations, when honesty is also important, what are these same students telling their doctors, teachers, parents, and significant others? Are they being honest about their actions, or are they answering with extreme lies there, too?

In such situations, academic advisors may find it difficult to subdue the urge to scream out "LIAR!" reminiscent of Valerie in *The Princess Bride*. Is it our role to correct negative behavior? If it is, then how do we correct these behaviors while maintaining open advising relationships? There is no cookie-cutter answer to these questions. Instead, this is something each of us must figure out for ourselves. Nevertheless, there are some strategies that are helpful in creating appropriate responses to these situations.

It may be helpful to discuss with students how their actions impact their future. It could be as simple as asking students if they are aware that these behaviors are negative. Some students may not have the critical thinking skills to realize how their decisions contribute to their character development in both positive and negative ways. Students may not associate bad choices, such as dishonesty or an inability to assume responsibility, with poor character development. Advisors can help reinforce that accepting one's mistakes and growing from them are good habits to establish. These good habits can lead to good choices, and good choices produce positive character development.

Another approach might involve "care-fronting" students. "Care-fronting" is a term used in residence life circles for approaching situations from a place of concern. Some of us may not feel comfortable confronting students on obvious lies, but can address these issues out of concern. Advisors can use hypothetical situations—for example: "I hear you telling me (insert lie), and hypothetically speaking, if what you are telling me is not true, what do you think the ultimate consequences would be?" The discussion generated by use of this technique can help students learn that they are not doing anyone a favor when they are dishonest. In fact, they are short-changing themselves in the process.

Another suggestion may appeal to the completely exhausted and fully frustrated advisors among us who have heard every excuse in the book. This approach involves creativity. Since students' lies are their reality, play along with the students. Take the situation presented as "reality" and go with it. If the story involves extremities that suddenly do not work, then ask for a doctor's note so the students can access services legally available

Sparklers

It takes but one **SPARK** to ignite the flame for an idea. *Does your campus have an unusual or exceptional process or program that could spark an idea on another campus?* If so, tell us about it in **350 words or less**. Send your **'Sparkler'** to LEIGH@KSU.EDU.
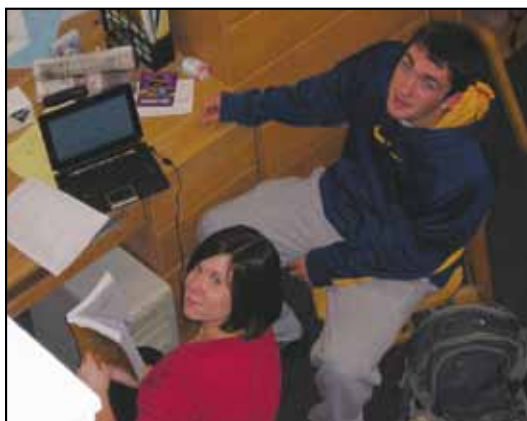
This edition's SPARKLERs come from **Jennifer Jones** (West Virginia University) and **Nola Moudry** (University of North Texas).

Inspired by a 2008 NACADA Annual Conference session by Santa Clara University, West Virginia University (WVU) implemented a residential advising program in January 2009. The Undergraduate Advising Services Center (UASC) partnered with residence life and retention services to bring advising into three residence halls. WVU is a large university with two campus locations. Developmental Advising Specialist Jennifer Jones and colleague Allison Glass (pictured with student) tell us that "more than half of our freshmen live on the remote campus. Since retention rates are lower there, we decided unanimously to focus our energies there to pilot the program. Improving retention, offering easily accessible help to students, and improving the way advising is viewed across campus were reasons for starting this initiative." UASC has ten full-time advisors and 30 graduate assistant advisors. The center advises over 7,000 students each year, including undecided students and some pre-major students, primarily freshmen and sophomores. Residential advising is provided in three hour time blocks three days a week. Jennifer explains, "We have three advisors that do this as part of their normal work week and flex time at other times in the week to even out their hours. The advisors are given a half hour in their schedules each week for writing in student folders and another one for a planning meeting with the other residential advisors. We do everything that our advising center does except give the students the required code they need each semester for registration. Students see us to discuss major changes, summer classes, minors, GPA, matriculation, to name a few. For students that are not advised in our center, we give them general information and the contact information for their advisor. Getting the word out has been a challenge. The director of residence life distributed flyers and handouts to the residence hall staff about residential advising. The assistant director of retention services let us meet with her graduate assistants to distribute information and ask for help getting the word out to students. In the spring semester we had a drawing for $25 gift cards to WVU's bookstore. This fall we went to all of the mandatory freshman seminar classes to talk about advising and distributed information cards to every freshman in those classes. Even though we are only in a portion of the residence halls, any student is welcome for advising. We also advertise for it in our freshman advising workshops that are mandatory for the freshmen we advise, via emails, and flyers posted in the residence halls." For more information, please contact Jennifer at Jennifer.Jones@mail.wvu.edu.

Although the University of North Texas already had in place a campus-wide system which required students on academic action to meet with their academic advisor prior to registration, the College of Education Student Advising Office decided that more needed to be done with and for their students on academic action. **Nola Moudry**, Academic Advisor II, tell us that "since our office consisted of eight advisors with varying methods and styles of advising, we thought a standardized and structured conversation would be more effective for our students who were on academic action." The original form, a grade contract, offered a structured approach without scripting the conversation. It allowed advisors the freedom to engage the students through their individual advising styles. Through the years, the form has evolved into an Academic Success Contract, which is an inclusive form created by advisors for specific purposes: 1) to initiate a structured conversation, 2) help empower the students so that they are in control of their academic career and decisions, 3) create student awareness about supportive resources that are available on campus and online, and 4) help the student realize that a positive outcome is both possible and probable. Specific elements within the contract allow for information exchange and aid in the ability of advisors to have difficult conversations with students. These elements include hours working versus hours enrolled in school, a visual representation of where the student's GPA is and where it needs to be for graduation, the student's responsibilities and university policies, the failed courses, importance of academic resources, and the consequences of not increasing their GPA. A mid-semester follow-up section offers the opportunity for students to reflect on their academic choices and initiates a discussion of current standing in their courses. Nola reports, "What started as a simple form for a structured conversation has become a form used for multiple conversations that help to engage students by aiding in the development of their educational goals." The form was showcased in a poster session at the 2009 NACADA Annual Conference in San Antonio. For further information, contact Nola Moudry at nola.moudy@unt.edu.

NACADA
Career Services Corner

NACADA
National ACademic ADvising Association

Dear Career Corner:

I really enjoy being an academic advisor, but I've been frustrated at work lately and wonder if I've outgrown my current responsibilities. I've started looking for new positions, but in the current economy, there may not be any open advising positions any time soon. Do you have any suggestions?

Sincerely,

Frustrated Advisor

Dear Frustrated Advisor:
It's your environment. It's your career.

If you are an academic advisor who is frustrated with your advising office work space, certain processes and procedures, or simply has a desire to take on new challenges, do not get discouraged. Most importantly, do not allow your frustration to impede your performance and productivity. Instead, take three steps toward enhancing your current work situation, and be sure to integrate your contributions into your job search documents. Enhance your work environment and boost your resume at the same time!

Decide to invest in yourself. No one likes a chronic complainer nor enjoys being around a Debbie Downer. The first step in enhancing your advising work environment is to decide that you will not allow your frustrations to negatively impact your advising experience. Instead, decide to invest a portion of your time and energy into taking initiative. Then consider following through with a collaborative approach.

Take initiative. Bob Nelson (2002), ABA Bank Marketing columnist, suggests that taking initiative "can mean many things—tapping your inner creativity, tackling a persistent problem, capitalizing on opportunities or creating ways to improve your current work environment" (p.1). For example, if your advising office relies heavily on paper forms, many of which are outdated, you can take this opportunity to improve your current work environment. Start small and take the initiative to update (as needed) the forms that already exist. Then do your homework and meet with a member of the IT department to discuss the necessary steps to convert these paper forms into online forms and processes. Take this information and have a conversation with your supervisor—the goal being to convince him or her to buy into this idea. To seal this initiative, volunteer to serve as your advising department's primary contact with IT when implementing this paper to online conversion.

If you are looking for more responsibility or more ways to spend your time while at work, volunteer to co-teach one or more sections of your campus's First-Year Experience course. Additionally, you can even ask your supervisor if you can observe or assist with facilitating faculty advisor training sessions. Through observing, assisting, and having follow-up conversations with your supervisor, you should soon become comfortable enough to volunteer to take this task off of your supervisor's plate.

Collaborate. Develop and foster a strong collaborative spirit. To do this, it will be imperative for you to enhance both your willingness and ability to work alongside others. Consider co-sponsoring events such as a majors fair, open house, or academic program orientation. By collaborating with faculty, you can add the elements of support, general advising, and student success resources. You could also work with other campus offices, such as Student Life and Admissions, by offering to give a presentation during training sessions for student leader groups, including Resident Assistants, Orientation Leaders, Peer Mentors, and Peer Tutors. Your presentation could focus on highlighting the services and resources provided by your office, as well as connecting the dots between their course work and other aspects of their life. Such collaborations, according to Dorothy Benton-Nelson and Betsy McCalla-Wriggins, authors of *The Handbook of Career Advising* (2009) "often create positive supportive relationships that transfer to other collaborative efforts on campus" (p. 205).

Commission & Interest Group Updates

NACADA members can view updates and related information on the individual Commission or Interest Group home pages. Announcements, content-related resources, meetings and other conference events, leadership contact information, listserv subscription instructions, and other items of interest are posted on these Web pages.

You are encouraged to become more involved with the Commissions and Interest Groups by participating in events and activities or volunteering to serve on a committee. Visit the links below for more information on specific units and contact information for the Chairs of those units in which you have a special interest.

- Commissions:
  www.nacada.ksu.edu/Commissions/index.htm
- Interest Groups:
  www.nacada.ksu.edu/InterestGroups/index.htm

If you would like to update your current Commissions and Interest Groups memberships, please visit the C/IG Designation Form (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/CandIGDivision/ CIGD-Commission-IGDesignationForm.htm*). Please note that you do not have to be an official member of a particular Commission or Interest Group to access the information on their respective Web sites or to subscribe to specific listservs.

Bookmark your preferred Commissions and/or Interest Groups and check back throughout the year for updates and new developments!

2010 Regional Conferences

Region 1	Newton, MA	March 10-12, 2010
Region 2	Atlantic City, NJ	April 14-16, 2010
Region 3	Lexington, KY	May 16-18, 2010
Region 4	Atlanta, GA	March 21-23, 2010
Region 5	Niagara Falls, Ontario	April 14-16, 2010
Region 6	Lincoln, NE	May 12 - 14, 2010
Region 7	Overland Park KS	March 11-13, 2010
Region 9	Channel Islands Area	March 12, 2010
	Univ. of Hawaii - Manoa	March 25, 2010
	Univ. of San Francisco	March 5, 2010
Region 10	Colorado Springs, CO	March 3-5, 2010

Register at:
http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Events/ Conferences/Regional/upcoming.htm

Still time to register!

Advising Administration Commission
Janet M. Spence, Chair

The Advising Administration Commission (AAC) is making plans to improve its Web site and is soliciting ideas and suggestions from its membership regarding the content. What would YOU like to see on the Commission Web site? What would help advising administrators with their professional development and/ or their position responsibilities? Send your suggestions to **Charity Synder** (CSNYDER1@KENT. EDU).

The AAC plans to conduct a professional development needs analysis. Members of the Commission will receive a survey this spring to indicate then professional development needs. Results of the survey will assist the AAC in recommending advising administration programming to NACADA's Professional Development Committee. Be on the lookout for the survey and submit it by the date requested.

The first NACADA Advising Administration Monograph is being planned for release in late 2011. Kudos go to co-editors **Jennifer Joslin** and **Nancy Markee** and to **Marsha Miller**, Managing Editor. They are working diligently to make the monograph one that all advising administrators will want to refer to as their number one resource!

The AAC is developing a vision and mission to guide its work for the present and future. **Linda Higginson** (LXH1@PSU.EDU) is leading this effort for the Commission and would welcome any feedback/suggestions you'd like to forward to her.

Do you have any "hot" advising administration topics you would like to see addressed by the AAC? **Nancy Roadruck** is soliciting ideas for a hot topics session that will be sponsored by the AAC at the Annual Conference in Orlando. Forward any ideas/suggestions to her at NANCY5@UAKRON.EDU.

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Discover the Advisor Within: How to be effective when working with groups

Advisors can learn to be effective when they advise students in groups. The benefit of groups is that the very thing that makes them challenging can also be their greatest asset: the broad application of what constitutes 'group advising' means that virtually anything can fit here. Big or small, informational or relational, advisors are only limited by their imaginations. This means that in order to be effective with groups, we must understand our strengths. That, paired with a solid understanding of our preferred ways to present information, are the two most important 'tools' needed. The question becomes do we prefer meeting around a small table with groups of five? Or, do we shine when standing on a platform in front of 1400?

The good news for experienced advisors is that we can naturally distill the experiences gained from individual advising into an understanding of what we must cover in the group process. We also know when a student response or question is typical or atypical and can respond accordingly. The less encouraging news for inexperienced advisors is that group advising will be more challenging than individual advising appointments. Inexperienced advisors should enlist the help of more experienced advisors before embarking on their first group advising mission (Woolston and Ryan, 2007, p.119-123).

To best utilize a group approach, advisors must consider a few key elements:

• Incorporate the principles of developmental advising.
• Choose material that is concise, engaging, and will be helpful to the student.
• Identify the purpose of the group advising event. Is it intended to be informational? Or does the event fall under the relational category where discussions, team builders, and lots of hands on activities characterize the general approach?
• Use a student-centered process that emphasizes shared responsibility.
• Select a time for the event. There is some magic involved in selecting times for group type activities. Tap the planning experts on campus, *e.g.*, student activity organizers, to find out what times to avoid or consider.

To help ensure success:
• Involve the right constituents for planning. These could be advisors, counselors, administrators, faculty, students, guest speakers, entertainers, and more!
• Enlist allies for promotion, collaboration, and feedback.
• Decide on the size of the group. Consider the material to be covered and the amount of activity and/or one-on-one advisor access needed. These will be helpful when establishing group numbers.
• Select a central location large enough to hold the group and any break-out sessions needed.
• Build in interaction activities so that students participate in the process.
• Select a time for the event that takes into consideration student patterns.
• Remember that students like food. Often the presence of food is cited as a main consideration whether students attend a group meeting. (Note: Woolston and Ryan provide a step-by-step guide for planning group advising sessions on p. 120 of *The New Advisor Guidebook: Mastering the art of advising through the first year and beyond*.)

Conclusion

Group advising is not a replacement for traditional academic advising, but rather should be used to enhance an existing program. Using groups presents the opportunity for advisors to intentionally provide information in a most efficient and time sensitive way. Deciding to use groups is easier said than done.
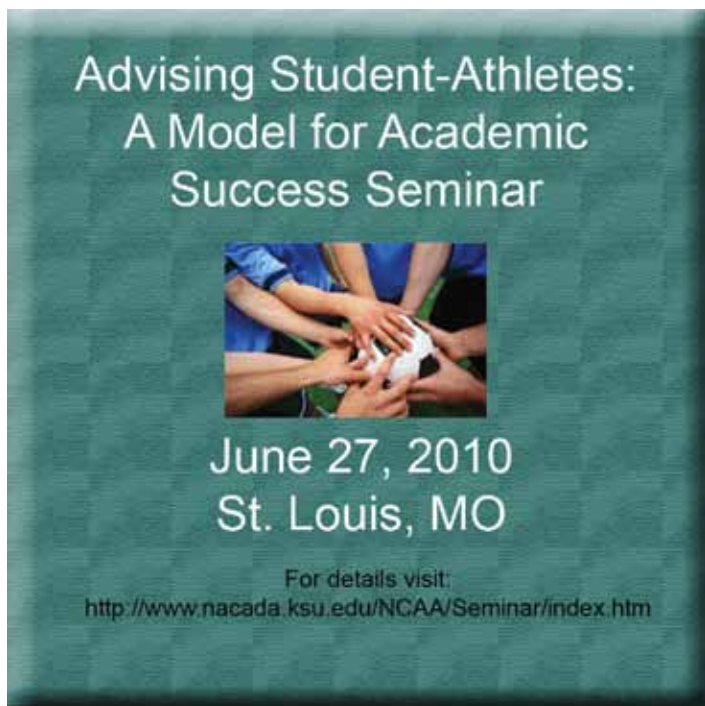
While most can agree that groups could play a proactive role in an advising setting, doing groups well takes a different kind of magic. There is a wide range of considerations involved in choosing how and when to use groups. Advisors must have serious discussions regarding how to utilize groups in their situation. Advisors in small or solo units should discuss group advising options with colleagues in similar positions at their institution or with colleagues on one of the NACADA sponsored listservs.

Ultimately, the success of any group advising program is dependant on multiple variables but advisors must include an honest assessment of their personality styles, knowledge of the material, and confidence levels if a group advising event is to be a success. But even considering all of these variables, group advising is an important delivery method that can allow advisors to manage student contact and information delivery in efficient and effective ways.

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Advising Student-Athletes:
A Model for Academic
Success Seminar

June 27, 2010
St. Louis, MO

For details visit:
http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/NCAA/Seminar/index.htm

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In Search of Inspiration in Our . . .

service contracts, marketing and promotion, copy editing, grant writing in support of Association activities, research efforts, and clerical support as needed. The Executive Office has been given more responsibility for the implementation of association activities to lessen the burden on the volunteer leadership of the association. This includes coordination of publications and events, marketing of all activities and the association in general, conference planning, tech services, and other tasks as assigned. The Executive Office is assisted by member based Advisory Boards and Review Boards. The Executive Director serves on the Board of Directors and meets with the Council." Please check out these amazing diamonds at *www.nacada.ksu.edu/AboutNACADA/execstaff.htm.*

In the end, we hope that all NACADA members will think of themselves as diamonds in a vast backyard—a world-wide network of advising professionals. You are the change makers both on your own campuses and among your students. We urge you to inspire and be inspired. John Quincy Adams once famously said that "if your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." We couldn't agree more.

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access to some of the best resources and research within the field, but *Clearinghouse* articles can be used as the foundation for professional development meetings on campus or within an advising unit. A great example is a new article to the *NACADA Clearinghouse*, authored by long-time member **Maura Reynolds**, entitled "An Advisor's Half Dozen: Principles for Incorporating Learning Theory into Our Advising Practices" (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/ AdvisingIssues/learning.htm*).

- Attend one of our live webcasts (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/ Webinars/index.htm*) or utilize the CD from a past webcast (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/Webinars/onDisk.htm*). Webcasts are great tools for providing on-campus professional development for groups or individuals at a low cost and without travel.
- Develop a curriculum for professional development workshops on campus using the NACADA series of Pocket Guides (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/Monographs/pocketguides. htm*) on specific topics such as Faculty Advising and Utilizing an Academic Advising Syllabus. These cost-effective guides can serve as the foundation for an advisor workshop and provide participants with a high-quality "take away."
- Use the NACADA training and development DVD, *Scenes for Learning and Reflection*, as the basis for quality in-house professional development events that are fun and valuable. These ten scenes, along with the second volume of ten scenarios being developed this spring, are a great way to stimulate discussion about the skills and knowledge needed for quality academic advising experiences (*www.nacada. ksu.edu/Videos/index.htm#three*).

These are just a few of the ways your NACADA membership continues to provide the best in support, resources, and assistance to you!

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the agenda of an academic advising center. At both Georgia State and Gainesville State, advising modules, consisting of sessions delivered by one advisor on multiple occasions, are integrated into freshman orientation classes. The modules are structured so that the advisors deliver clear and purposeful advising information with content tied to specific learning outcomes. The advisor is encouraged to interact with students during class, and to stay after class to address more specific or personal student issues. The advisor may also email reminders to these students regarding important dates and academic progress checks. Interacting with the same advisor more than once jumpstarts the relationship between student and advisor and provides assurance that there is at least one person on campus who cares and is accessible to address student needs.

Advising centers are most beneficial when consistently used by students as a year-round resource for educational planning and support. Strategies for encouraging academic advising during non-peak times help connect students to an advising center. Once there, students are exposed to knowledgeable, caring, and supportive professionals, increasing the likelihood of future interactions with advisors.

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NACADA Professional Development Committee Seeks Your Ideas

In these trying economic times, the NACADA Professional Development team is seeking your ideas for low-cost ways to deliver professional development to our membership. NACADA consistently searches for cost conscious and cost effective ways to deliver its services to you and your institutions. Currently, NACADA offers affordable local drive-in workshops in many states, regional and annual conferences, Webinars, online resources and materials, and numerous publications in a variety of formats to address the diverse professional development needs of its members and the institutions they serve. But we recognize that funding for professional development is diminishing at the same time that advisors' need for professional development is increasing as they are asked to do more with less. So we seek your creative ideas on how we can deliver cost-effective programs to you. If you have a suggestion for a way NACADA can reach you and your colleagues at your institution in a cost-effective way, we want to hear about it. Please submit your professional development ideas to Leigh Cunningham at Leigh@ksu.edu by April 15, 2010.

to introduce potential students to the program director, academic advisors, current students, alumni, and future peers.

2. **Congratulatory Calls and Emails:** Personalize the acceptance process. In addition to sending official acceptance packets, academic advisors should send personal emails to incoming students congratulating them and providing program information and a plan of study. The program director should personally call accepted students to further develop a sense of community prior to matriculation.

3. **Orientation:** Develop orientation materials that introduce students to online expectations and provide points of contact before courses begin. Orientation materials should include a detailed email from the academic advisor directing students to the information needed to be successful in the program. In addition, students should complete an orientation to any course content management system.

4. **Online First-Year Experience:** Connect students to the institution through an Online First-Year Experience. Innovative strategies and events should bring the campus to students, *e.g.*, virtual tea, alumni lecture series, and guest lectures.

5. **On-campus Venues:** Provide opportunities for online students to attend on-campus events, *e.g.*, convocation, graduation, leadership lecture series, that are simultaneously broadcast through the Internet using streaming platforms.

6. *Mondays with Maria:* Designate specific times when students can chat with their advisor using instant messenger for direct question/answer.

7. **Resource Portal:** Develop a portal to serve as a hub for information and provide a blog for updates, information, resources, and to encourage student engagement.

8. **On-going Reminders:** Send updated program information, important dates, events, and news on current students and alumni through a quarterly newsletter, email, or posts on the resource portal.

9. **Mentoring Program:** Establish a mentoring program to connect new students with experienced students or recent program alumni who can provide new students with support and networking connections.

10. **Data Driven Decision-Making:** Collect and utilize formative and summative data for continuous quality improvement. In addition to course evaluations, conduct an annual survey regarding the program, support services, expectations, and satisfaction.

Online education is an integral part of higher education. While online students may not physically come to campus, the MSHE data indicates that online students want an educational experience that is personalized, where they are addressed by name, can interact synchronously/asynchronously, and are provided reminders just as they would receive in a traditional classroom. Technology allows academic advisors to reach out and engage online students and bring the campus to online students using OHT strategies.

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to risk-taking. Advisors should teach students that taking risks may or may not generate career opportunities, but the lack of action definitely provides no new opportunities. Taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes will generate at least the possibility of "chance" events.

We need to help students understand that "planned happenstance" is a normal occurance as well as a model they can use to make career decisions. Through planned happenstance, advisors assist students to transform curiosity into opportunities, teach them how to produce desirable chance events, and help them overcome blocks to action. Students then use this model to make career decisions throughout their lives.

One of our students, an English Language major, had no idea what career she wished to pursue. When asked to think of past experiences that had meaning to her, she shared that she had organized her high school homecoming parade. She loved planning and organizing this event. Her advisor helped the student recognize this as a normal "chance" event in her life, one she could use to "construct" or generate other opportunities to plan events: major fairs, new student orientation, education conferences, etc. The advisor helped the student make meaning of this "chance" opportunity in her life which provided skills, experiences, additional opportunities, and direction to pursue a career as an event planner.

Through planned happenstance, we encourage students to "plan" for chance opportunities by developing traits and skills and having experiences that will help them recognize and even "create" career opportunities. As advisors help liberal arts and social science students "make meaning of" and capitalize on these experiences and opportunities, we help them "follow their hearts" to career success.

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Implications for Other Institutions: Academic advisors should look at their own standard usage of the term *elective*, especially in reference materials such as their institution's Catalog of Studies. Institutions should offer concrete, uniform definitions that apply to their student population. This would ensure that when students see the term *elective(s)* they understand that it is used in a common language, as opposed to hearing several different applications of the term with sometimes radically different meanings.

Similarly, advisors should create a uniform set of terms to use when talking with students. Such consistent diction could help students spread their understanding to classmates, even if they unintentionally do so. At the very least, such common terms will make explanations much easier with returning students.

Conclusion: In general, this informal study shows the potential for examining the academic language advisors, faculty, and staff use in communication with students. If students do not understand their requirements they can hardly be expected to take ownership of their own educational experiences.

Further, this study serves as an example of how advisors can do quick, informal studies on topics that affect their advising practice and make a difference to the success of our students.

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question. Regardless of how the discussion is orchestrated, write down feedback to be considered as the study emerges.

When we share the development of research studies with colleagues we increase our productivity by sharing the work and maintaining our motivation to finish our study.

4. **Find a mentor who will nurture our interests in research.** Develop a mentoring relationship with a faculty member or advising colleague. The act of mentoring involves a nurturing relationship in which an experienced individual acts as a guide and/or role model for an individual learning to negotiate a system or activity (Johnson, 2007). A research mentor offers guidance as we design a study, suggests strategies to overcome obstacles, and recommends avenues to disseminate findings.

There are many techniques for identifying potential mentors. One strategy is to engage our advisees in conversations about faculty who teach research courses. Students frequently offer insight gained from their experiences that can help us identify appropriate candidates. Another strategy is to take a research course and engage the instructor in conversation about the development of the proposed study. A third strategy is to contact advising colleagues who have conducted research on similar issues.

It is critical that advisors remember the words of Padak and his colleagues (2005) as they initiate a mentoring relationship: ". . . every academic advisor is a potential researcher and . . . every researcher could profit from collaboration with practicing advisors" (p. 6).

Conclusion
Academic advising as a profession prospers from knowledge created when advisors and advising administrators research answers to the overarching questions within their advising practice. Any advisor can understand the process of inquiry. Some techniques that can help advisors build their research toolbox include reading research articles, developing research teams, engaging in discussions about research, and identifying a research mentor.

Every campus offers opportunities to engage in research on some level, and NACADA offers many resources that will help facilitate understanding of the research process. The time has arrived for practicing advisors to utilize research tools and techniques to build their confidence and expertise for scholarship and inquiry.

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to individuals missing the aforementioned extremity. When plague-like symptoms hit and students cannot get out of bed to come to their appointments, indicate that they should not see anyone until they have obtained a doctor's note assuring all that they are no longer contagious. After all, we do not want them to infect everyone on campus!

As advisors, we must learn not to become frustrated by student antics. Instead, we must play the hand, or the stories, dealt us. When confronted with their behaviors, hopefully these students will learn that it is a lot more work to maintain lies than it is to opt for honesty in the first place.

The strategies suggested here for dealing with student lies allows advisors to teach students that:
• it is important to stress honesty and responsibility with our students,
• it is essential that students learn that life is about experiencing both successes and failures, and
• lies and excuses do not help them learn from their mistakes.

Most advisors encounter student lies during our careers. It is helpful if we have a game plan ready to address these issues with students and still maintain a professional advising relationship. As the semester progresses, be aware, an abominable snow beast may have eaten your next student's leg!

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Suggested resource: Academic Honesty
www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/documents/lies.ppt

Advisees' positive feedback about the hardcopy SAC PAC also gave us data to support the budget for continuing to produce the paper version.

Advisee Goal Setting

A few years ago we conducted a pilot study on goal setting with first-year students; this study evolved into a major focus of our advising center. Each semester our advisees are encouraged to select a semester goal from the SAC goal sheet. Goals include developing study strategies for college classes, getting involved in campus activities, improving time-management skills, choosing a major, etc. Each goal choice is supported by a number of suggestions for achieving that goal. Knowing that millennial students are goal-orientated, we assumed that our most recent survey would support what we are already doing with goal setting. Several of the statistics already cited about time-management issues, need for study strategies, and interest in getting involved suggest that our assumption is correct. We have added a number of suggestions to our goal sheet based on the new survey data.

Implications

Although this research is directed toward approaches, materials, and tools used in a specific academic advising center, the results provide useful information for other collegiate academic advising settings and advisor training sessions. Academic advisors need to teach millennial students effective study strategies designed to help them succeed in college-level coursework and help them develop time management skills to prioritize their time for study, work, social activities, and internet use. Millennial students also need useful information about ways to get involved on campus and in the community. Finally, these students find it helpful to have access to on-line advising information which they can share with parents.

We have just begun to interpret and use the data we have collected. There is much yet to be mined, such as gender differences, first-generation student information, the impact of parental education levels, and comparison of millennial student and non-traditional student needs.

We encourage other advising centers to design millennial student surveys because the data gathered will strengthen academic advising and ultimately help advisees succeed academically.

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advising. There are many more detailed articles and resources available via the NACADA T**echnology in Academic Advising** *Clearinghouse* Web site (*www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Technology.htm*), where members will find numerous excellent references on utilizing technology in academic advising.

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questions during advising sessions is important to validating student concerns and problems. Also, the attitudinal approach we bring to every advising interaction tells the student whether or not we care. Students want to feel they can trust an advisor with their problems; our responses to their concerns help them determine their level of trust in us. It is important that we not prejudge any student and keep our ability to address their needs unclouded. Additionally, conscious acts like demonstrating empathy, encouragement, sincerity, and compassion help preserve the fundamental aspects of the student-advisor relationship.

Furthermore, there must be a mutual understanding between advisor and student that all student expectations may not be able to be met. The student has responsibilities equal to those of the advisor in the establishment of the student-advisor relationship. There must be an emphasis on shared communication and student responsibility. This will help advisors cultivate the teachable moments, emphasize important life skills, and nurture a student's potential for success.

In the end, "service" is not about changing the way advisors do their job. It is about changing the perception of how we view "service" in relation to the new expectations students have of us. Advising is still teaching; our caring attitudes should be perceived as the "most potent retention force on campus" (Noel, 1985, p.17).

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portfolios. Computer screens are great places for favorite quotations. Student success stories should be published on-line and in brochures and newsletters. Above all, advisors should display a ready smile and a sense of humor.

Tip 9: Read a Variety of Books.
There are a multitude of available reading selections within the field and outside it; check coworkers' bookshelves, campus libraries, and on-line book lists, e.g., the *NACADA Journal* Book Reviews (see *www.nacada.ksu.edu/Journal/broverview.htm*). Don't limit reading selections to only professional books and Web sites; check out memoirs and fictional books for inspiration.

Tip 10: Be Flexible.
Advising is never dull. While that fact should be celebrated, it also means that a great deal of flexibility is required of professionals within the field. Advisors never know what lies on the other side of the door and thus should be prepared to change course multiple times within the work day.

Conclusion
Advising is a special field that provides us with the opportunity to make significant differences in students' lives. Stepping into the role of advisor can be overwhelming especially when a new advisor doesn't know where to begin. With the help of this list and the resources noted here (including the *New Advisor Guidebook* see www.nacada.ksu.edu/Monographs/M16.htm), advisors can begin their careers with a feeling of confidence and positive anticipation.

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learned during the week and how much I had to show for my efforts. When I returned to campus, I presented my Action Plan to my supervisor and we have started to revamp our advisor training.

One day at the Institute I talked with my group leader, Jayne Drake, at lunch. When I asked her how she became so involved with an advising association instead of an organization for faculty, she explained that the people in NACADA are unlike those in any other associations. I didn't have to attend the Summer Institute to know that this was true; it was in the caring attitudes of Institute faculty and attendees that made my experience more memorable. For this reason, and many others, I encourage anyone who wants to grow as a professional and make a difference on their campus to attend a Summer Institute.

Less than one year after attending my first Annual Conference, I had completed an Institute, seen my picture on display as a scholarship winner, and met and interacted with the Leaders of the organization. I look forward to continuing my involvement with NACADA and to my continued growth as an advisor. Do yourself a favor: make plans to attend Summer Institute and experience a professional development opportunity unlike any other!

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Talking With You for One Moment is Much Better than Reading Books for Ten Years: NACADA Summer Institute Experiences

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My Seven Days and Eight Years
In China, we have an old saying: *Talking with you for one moment is much better than reading books for ten years*. At the NACADA Summer Institute, I talked with faculty members and fellow participants for seven days. It was the best growth experience within the advising field ever. All academic advisors should experience the NACADA Summer Institute!

During the NACADA Summer Institute, my brain did not stop absorbing knowledge and my passion for advising came back. I now feel fully charged and full of power. My mind is more clear and organized. My eyes are shining and bright, and my heart is closer to our students.

During my eight years working with students, things have not always gone smoothly. I have had lots of challenges and worries. How can I better help students? What areas should I support more strongly? What are the best practices? Sometimes I felt completely lost without guidance and resources. I always strive to better help students, but sometimes it did not work out. Having only the will to help is not enough; we must know best practices, learn effective skills, craft an advising mission statement, and be aware of student needs.

The Banquet of Academic Advising
The NACADA Summer Institute is very organized. The program includes various learning activities from basic concepts to more advanced advising skills and strategies. We received information that was both theoretical and practical. We could freely choose to attend sessions on a variety of advising topics. We had group discussions, workshops, common readings, and action plans. There were so many ways we could learn about advising.

One of the most valuable parts of the Institute was the sharing. Our faculty members were experts who did not mind sharing their stories, experiences, good practices, and treasures. Sharing is growing. Besides eating meals together, each participant could sign up for a 15 minute one-on-one talk with a faculty member. It was our chance to pour out our concerns and hear strategies that could help us find solutions for our students.
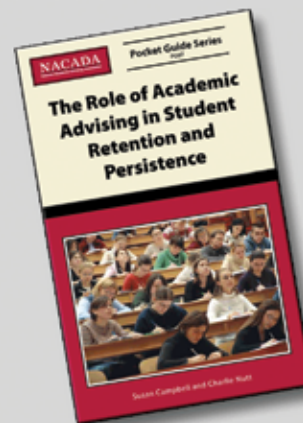
Advising Family
NACADA is a big family. Our family members are really friendly and caring. My Small Group was very international, with members from the Netherlands, Egypt, China and the United States. We discussed our issues from the perspective of different cultures and backgrounds. I really felt that this benefited our group. There was always something to learn from each other.

My group leader, **Rich Robbins**, is very knowledgeable and analytical. He helped us expand our ideas and thoughts. He facilitated good group sessions and provided excellent feedback. Participants from our group gave us a tour of Kansas

City, and we had a fantastic dinner together. We also got a chance to see a big league baseball game. What wonderful people! I had a really good time.

Deeper in the Heart of Student Success
Advisors help students navigate college life. At Summer Institute, we learned how to better accomplish this by reading case studies and discussing our concerns and challenges; we analyzed student needs and situations. After seven days learning and sharing, we were clear about the goals we need have in order to help students, we understood the trends of the Millennial students, and knew what we could do to improve our advising skills.

As academic advisors, we must keep growing within the field. In a previous edition of *Academic Advising Today* (September 2008), Past-President **Jennifer Bloom** wrote that sometimes we forget to "walk the talk." We need to be lifelong learners ourselves, and Summer Institute is a way to accomplish that.

Summer Institute is an excellent choice to help us grow as advisors. Whether a new advisor who needs to grow as a professional or an experienced advisor wanting to become a master advisor, Summer Institute is for you!

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Career Corner . . .

After it is all said and done, add these workplace contributions and improvements to your resume. Additionally, you will be able to refer to these experiences during a job interview when asked about your decision-making skills, your role as a member of a team, and your ability to be proactive and generate workable ideas.

Best of Luck!

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