



Academic Advisor Guide

Policy Area: Management

Approval: Chairperson, Board of Directors

Signature:

Date:

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to provide Academic Advisors with the necessary background and information to effectively and efficiently advise students at Sheridan College

2. RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Initial approval of policy and later amendments:	Board of Directors
Amendment of procedures consistent with the policy:	Principal
Distribution of policy:	Principal
Implementation of policy:	Principal, Faculty
Monitoring and compliance of policy:	College Council
Evaluation and recommendations for amendments:	College Council, Principal, Faculty, Registrar

3. WHAT IS ACADEMIC ADVISING?

Academic advising is an important part of the role of the teaching staff at Sheridan College. The following quotation from David Crockett, "Academic Advising," *Increasing Student Retention* (1987) describes that role:

Academic advising is a developmental process that assists students in the clarification of their life/career goals and in the development of educational plans for the realization of these goals. It is a decision-making process by which students realize their educational potential through mutual planning and information exchange with an advisor. The advisor serves as a facilitator of communication; a coordinator of learning experiences through courses, career planning, and academic progress reviews; and an agent of referral to other campus agencies as necessary.

Noel-Levitz, nationally recognized leaders in retention research report "that half of the students who did not have some significant contact with a faculty or staff member in the first three weeks on campus dropped out of that institution. Informal interaction with students and faculty outside the classroom appears to be crucial to integrating students into the life of the college and thus becomes an important factor in retention as well."

Dr. Kenneth Gangel of Dallas Theological Seminary reports in the American Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) *Newsletter* that generally there are five logical and sequential steps to the advising process:

1. Exploration of life goals,
2. Exploration of career goals,
3. Selection of a major or program of study,

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4. Selection of courses, and
5. Scheduling of courses.

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) in the USA has developed a set of goals for academic advising. They include:

1. Assisting student in self-understanding and self-acceptance (values clarification; understanding abilities, interests, and limitations)
2. Assisting students in considering their life goals by relating their interests, skills, abilities, and values to careers, the world of work, and the nature and purpose of higher education.
3. Assisting students in developing an educational plan consistent with their life goals and objectives
4. Assisting students in developing decision-making skills
5. Providing accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs
6. Referring students to other institutional or community support services
7. Assisting students in evaluating or reevaluating progress toward established goals and educational plans

These various sources illustrate the breadth of what can and should happen in the advising relationship. The expectation is that faculty will assist students in accomplishing not only their educational goals but also encourage students to develop in other areas as well. This development part of the holistic growth desired for all Sheridan College students. The relationship between the advisor and student is one of the key areas in which this takes place. Advising by a member of the teaching staff is an important part of Sheridan College accomplishing its core purpose of offering higher education to students who are seeking to live an extraordinary life.

Another aspect central to advising is to help students understand the value of post-secondary education. A Sheridan College education is unique in that our mission includes inspiring students to become instruments of peace in the world, not just educating someone for their own personal benefits. This larger educational outcome of cannot be ignored. Seeing young people develop a solid Christian worldview that leads to lives of service must be balanced with the practical aspects of pursuing education.

This policy provides Sheridan College teaching staff with tools and resources for successful academic advising and should be used in conjunction with the College's various handbooks.

4. TYPES OF STUDENTS

There are a variety of students who require the input from an academic advisor. The needs of students when it comes to advising can vary depending on where they happen to be on their educational journey. Below are a few examples of the 'types' of students advisors will encounter.

- First-Year Students v continuing students
- On-campus v External Students
- Full-time v part-time students
- School leavers v mature-age students
- Students transferring from other institutions

Each of these student types will place different types of demands on the advisor. As students move through their educational journey, different needs will arise. Students typically move from needing information to more consultation as they near the end of their schooling. The consultation can largely revolve around the transition to the next chapter in a student's journey. For some this will be further education; for others this will mean moving into job market or some other pursuit. Whatever the case,

the time of transition can be challenging and an academic advisor can play a key role in seeing student successfully transition to the next chapter of their journey.

5. DUTIES OF ADVISORS

Perhaps a key point in understanding *the general philosophy of advising is to view academic advising not as a transaction but as a relationship* in which the advisor desires to see the student develop in all aspect of life. This relationship would certainly include instructional aspects seen in the traditional teacher-student relationship but ideally it would grow beyond this into a relationship where the student is comfortable and desires the advisor to speak into multiple facets of their journey. The advisor could also think of their roles as one of a model where they call the student to follow their example in life, vocation, scholarship, and discipleship. The basis for this would be Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians in I Corinthians 11:1 "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ" (NIV). Students will likely remember little of what is contained in our lectures but how we interact with them and what we build into their lives at a personal level will be remembered for a lifetime.

An advisor must be:

1. A reliable source of information who is:

- a. Knowledgeable about general academic information as stated in the College handbooks and about policies related to the division in which the advisor supports the students.
- b. Knowledgeable about the programs in their department and their academic requirements.
- c. Knowledgeable about the general education requirements, with an understanding of how they fit with the program.
- d. Capable of advising students so they can move swiftly and efficiently through their program in a timely manner.
- e. Capable of articulating and modeling Christian worldview integration in their field of study

2. A personal model

"A role model is a person who possesses skills and displays techniques that the student lacks and from whom, by observation and comparison with their performance, students can learn new behaviors or change existing behaviors." (Kemper, p. 31, 1968) According to Kemper an advisor must meet the following conditions in order to have a significant impact on students:

- a. Accessibility - physical presence and approachability (attitude)
- b. Continuous contact for an extended period - repeated interaction, preferably both inside and outside the classroom,
- c. Casual relationships - creating a sense of community, *esprit de corps* and collegiality,
- d. Personally engaging relationships - quality vs. quantity.
- e. Availability to the student by posting and keeping regular office hours, following up with students, returning phone calls, and responding promptly to correspondence.
- f. Showing a personal interest in each advisee.
- g. Helping advisees pick courses appropriate to their abilities and needs.

3. An advocate

Kenneth Gangel describes an advocate as "developing relationships with students of sufficient closeness and depth that students can feel their accomplishments and potentials are appreciated" and as being "knowledgeable about students' basic skills, abilities, backgrounds. . .keeping the student's interest and well-being in mind no matter what the departmental or institutional climate."

- a. ability to refer advisees to on-campus and off-campus resources to assist them in their academic needs.
- b. demonstration of an earnest concern for advising.

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4. A vocational mentor

Advisors play a key role in the process whereby students acquire an occupational identity and develop a professional concept, according to Gangel.

- a. development of interests and skills - Encouragement by an advisor to pursue a graduate or professional degree helps advisees see possibilities beyond the program for career opportunities.
- b. acquisition of ideology - Students confront questions about the worth of what they are doing, i.e., "Why am I doing this rather than something else?" Through informal interaction with faculty and senior students, students come to view the field as worthwhile and adopt its ideals as their own.
- c. internalization of motives - Students begin to focus their attention on post-graduate employment. They begin seriously to consider themselves as capable of becoming full-fledged members of the field or profession.
- d. Sponsorship - Advisors write letters of reference to attesting to students' knowledge, skills, and talents, and certifying to the occupational world students' competence to function as practitioners in the academic discipline or profession.
- e. personal involvement - Advisors go beyond the professional skills of role modeling to include service in the personal/spiritual dimensions.

Students are annually given the opportunity to complete an academic advisor's survey. The resultant data are summarized into reports which are reviewed by HODs and the College Council. Because academic advising is a part of the formative and comprehensive assessment, it should be discussed and documented in faculty portfolios.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

It would be unrealistic to expect that it is only the teaching staff who carries any responsibilities for the success of the advising relationship and process. The student must also accept a level of responsibility for their education and the outcomes of their time at Sheridan College. White (2000) has listed a set of expectations for advisee's. These include:

1. Acquire the information needed to assume final responsibility for course scheduling, program planning, and the successful completion of all graduation requirements.
2. Seek the academic and career information needed to meet educational goals.
3. Become knowledgeable about the relevant policies, procedures, and rule of the College and academic program.
4. Be prepared with accurate information and relevant materials when contacting the advisor.
5. Consult with the advisor at least once a semester to decide on courses, review the accuracy of the worksheet, and check on progress towards graduation. (p. 185-186)

7. INFORMATION FOR ACADEMIC ADVISORS

The student and staff handbooks contain information on a variety of topics that may be of help at some point in the advising process. A copy of the Sheridan College Organizational Chart (found in Employee Handbook) will be useful when faculty or students need to determine where to direct questions. Heads of Department (*i.e.* those primarily responsible for programs in an area) are able and willing to answer the questions an advisor might have. In addition, the Registrar can serve as a valuable resource as well.

8. TIME MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

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One of the areas which can often present a challenge for college students is time management. The Registrar has more material related to aid students in developing their time manage skills. Feel free to contact the Registrar for more information or refer students to this office.

As a student, there are some basic Principles of Time Management that you can apply.

1. **Identify "Best Time" for Studying:** Everyone has high and low periods of attention and concentration. Are you a "morning person" or a "night person". Use your power times to study; use the down times for routines such as laundry and errands.
2. **Study Difficult Subjects First:** When you are fresh, you can process information more quickly and save time as a result.
3. **Use Distributed Learning and Practice:** Study in shorter time blocks with short breaks between. This keeps you from getting fatigued and "wasting time." This type of studying is efficient because while you are taking a break, the brain is still processing the information.
4. **Make Sure the Surroundings are Conducive to Studying:** This will allow you to reduce distractions which can "waste time." If there are times in the residence halls or your apartment when you know there will be noise and commotion, use that time for mindless tasks.
5. **Make Room for Entertainment and Relaxation:** College is more than studying. You need to have a social life, yet, you need to have a balance in your life.
6. **Make Sure you Have Time to Sleep and Eat Properly:** Sleep is often an activity (or lack of activity) that students use as their time management "bank." When they need a few extra hours for studying or socializing, they withdraw a few hours of sleep. Doing this makes the time they spend studying less effective because they will need a couple hours of clock time to get an hour of productive time. This is not a good way to manage yourself in relation to time.
7. **Try to Combine Activities:** Use the "Twofer" concept. If you are spending time at the laundromat, bring your psychology notes to study. If you are waiting in line for tickets to the concert, bring your biology flashcards to memorize.

These are some ideas to get you started. You can read more about time management in one of the books in the bibliography. You can also learn more at time management workshops. In addition, you should know that college students aren't the only ones who have become more efficient workers. Get a headstart and learn how to manage yourself in respect to time NOW.

9. APPENDIX: DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL RECORD

Document Title: Academic Advisor Guide

Source Documents: *Adapted with permission from:*
Corban University Academic Advising Handbook

Creamer, D. G. (2000). Use of theory in academic advising. In V.N. Gordon & W.R. Habley (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 18-34). San Fransico, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Habley, W. R. (2000). Current practices in academic advising. In V.N. Gordon & W.R. Habley (Eds.), *Academic advising - A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 35-43). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

White, E. R. (2000). Developing mission, goals, and objectives for the advising program. In V.N. Gordon & W.R. Habley (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 180-191). San Fransico, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kemper, T.D. (1968). Reference groups, socialization and achievement. *American Sociological Review*, 33, 31-45.

Associated Internal Documents:

Associated External Documents

Authorised Officer: Executive Principal

Approved by: Mr Darren Smith

Date of Approval: 02 Mar 2013

Next Review Before: Dec 2014

Version Number	Version Date	Authorised Officer	Amendment Details
1.00	02 Mar 2013	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Submitted to TEQSA for Sheridan College HEP registration: Attachment 8.5.1b Academic Advisor Policy
1.01	13 June 2017	Executive Principal	Review to ensure Threshold compliance