

Balancing Task-Oriented Advising with Relationship- Oriented Advising

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Sense of Belonging

- “[A student’s] view of whether he or she feels included in the college community” (Hurtado & Carter 1997 p. 327)
- Extent to which students feel welcomed by institutional environments and climates affects their success (Hurtado & Carter 1997)

Impact of Student-Faculty Interaction

- Frequency and quality of student-faculty interactions predict first-year academic outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini 1980)
- First year students who made a strong on campus connection with a faculty or staff member more likely to persist to second year (Ancar 2008; Clark, Tanner & Alvin 2015; Gohn & Albin 2006; Hoffinger & Rose 2006)

“[G]ood advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience” (Light 2001 p. 81).

Task Orientation vs. Relationship Orientation

Concept from Scholarship on Leadership:

- Tension exists between accomplishing tasks and building relationships with those one is leading (Fiedler 1967)
- Leader's inclination toward task or relationship orientation is a *preference* (Cowsill and Grint 2008)

Applied to Advising: Competing priorities of informational aspects of advising and mentorship/student development (Thibeault 2018)

- Key is finding **balance**

Task-Orientation vs. Relationship Orientation

TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:

Observe an advising meeting with a colleague who is especially strong in building relationships.

Ask students open-ended questions to get the student talking and reflecting on their experiences.

In addition to asking how classes are going, also ask students about what they are *learning* to bridge academics into the advising conversation.

Build trust with students by completing any follow-up within 24 hours.

Adapted from Thibeault, L. (2018, September). Relationship-orientated and task-orientated advising: Balancing skillsets. *Academic Advising Today*, 41(3). Retrieved from <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Relationship-Oriented-and-Task-Oriented-Advising-Balancing-Skillsets.aspx>

TO DEVELOP TASK ORIENTATION:

Observe an advising meeting with a colleague who is especially strong in the task orientation

Prep task-oriented items ahead of time so that they are simply being reviewed during the meeting

When unsure about requirements, let the student know that follow-up will occur within 24 hours

Write down goals for the meeting and check that they have been accomplished before the student leaves

Create systems to make tasks easier: to-do lists, bookmarking important websites, writing meeting notes immediately following the student meeting

Strengths-Based Approach

Uses students' talents as basis for creating educational plan.

The advisor asks student probing questions to identify strengths (within and outside of academic realm) and reflect on what led to successes in the past. They work together to leverage these strengths to overcome challenges

(Schreiner 2005)

Questions for Strengths-Based Advising

- What subjects do you enjoy studying the most? What fascinates you?
- Tell me about a time in your life when you accomplished something you were proud of.
- What brings out your best? What kind of environment and what kind of people tend to bring out the best in you?
- Which of your strengths do you think will be most useful to you in succeeding academically? Relationally? In your career?
- How would you describe the person you want to become? What is that person like? What is that person able to do?
- How can you capitalize on your strengths to become the person you want to be in 5 years?
- What could keep you from accomplishing your goal? What obstacles may get in the way? How can you use your strengths to overcome those obstacles?

(Schreiner n.d.)

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