BEST PRACTICES FOR ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Academic advisors at Missouri Western State University are committed to student development and student success. A combination of advising professionals and highly trained faculty and staff advisors ensure that all students receive personal, accurate, and appropriate academic advisement. As a result, the advisement process not only benefits students but also the faculty and staff members who work with them.

In training academic advisors, Student Success relies heavily on the experts: the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). NACADA is housed at Kansas State University and provides "a forum for discussion, debate, and the exchange of ideas pertaining to academic advising through numerous activities and publications" (from NACADA website). Student Success advisors also attended the Master Advisor training at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. We have adapted Best Practices for Academic Advisors from the workshop materials.

1. **Maintain regular contact with all advisees:**
   - Email advisees
     1. Log into GoldLink
     2. Click on Faculty tab
     3. Under Advisor Tools click on Advisee Listing
     4. Select Term
     5. Click Email your advisees
   - Schedule regular meetings with all advisees (once a semester, minimum)
   - Schedule more frequent meetings with advisees who are struggling academically

2. **Establish positive relationships with all advisees:**
   - Recognize advisees and be able to call them by name
   - Educate students about advisor and advisee roles and responsibilities (use of Advising Syllabus)
   - Maintain up-to-date advising notes
   - Show a personal interest in students' lives

3. **Provide accurate and timely information about the university and its programs:**
   - Know departmental and university requirements (The university catalog is a valuable tool! Online version can be found through the A to Z Search under Catalog)
   - Know how to find transfer equivalencies and degree audit information (Transfer Student Information & Guidelines can be found through the A to Z Search; Griffon GPS instructions can be found at [www.missouristate.edu/GriffonGPS](http://www.missouristate.edu/GriffonGPS))
   - Know guidelines for Financial Aid limitations/SAP holds
   - Know department and university deadlines and communicate pertinent information to advisees
   - Know and be able to refer students to the appropriate university resources, websites, and organizations

4. **Adopt a developmental approach to help advisees become independent learners and self-reliant problem solvers:**
   - Foster development of advisees' decision-making skills
   - Coach students on appropriate ways to advocate for themselves

5. **Enhance advisees' educational experience:**
   - Encourage appreciation for diversity within the university environment
   - Promote study away opportunities (A to Z Search-Study Abroad and Exchange Programs)
   - Promote involvement in internships, applied learning, and professional organizations

6. **Maintain a high degree of professionalism:**
• Maintain posted office hours
• Keep advising appointments
• Keep up to date on changing departmental and university requirements
• Prepare for advising appointments and document advising sessions
• Support university requirements and programs
• Maintain a positive attitude regarding departments, colleagues, and programs
• Maintain confidentiality (see FERPA Information)

Before the Advising Appointment

• Email advisees, reminding them to make pre-advisement appointments
• Familiarize yourself with advising tools: university catalog, major/minor forms, sample plans, Advisor Handbook (most current version available online)
• Review advising notes from previous session(s); be prepared to ask about issues that have caused problems in the past
• Review current degree audit information for completion of required courses
• Review additional information in Banner and Griffon GPS: holds, student information, test scores, transcript, midterm grades, etc.

During the Advising Appointment

• Review notes from information gathered prior to appointment
• Discuss external factors that could impact academic success (work schedule, family situations, unusual circumstances)
• Discuss student’s interests and goals
• Discuss test scores, past performance, midterm grades, and appropriate options for a major
• Discuss program of study (over a course of several semesters)
• Discuss course selection for upcoming semester
• Recommend they make another appointment to work through a degree plan

After the Advising Appointment

• Complete notes from advising session
• Follow up on any recommendations made to the student

For more information about advising, visit the NACADA website at [http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/)

(Adapted from the Master Advisor Handbook produced by the Academic Advisement Center at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri)

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