



ADVISING CASE STUDIES

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Top Ten Advising Questions

1. I don't know who my advisor is. Can you just give me my alternate pin?
2. How do I access/understand my degree evaluation?
3. I got a letter sent to my house that says I was dropped from my major. What do I do now?
4. I didn't have a midterm in that class, so how can I have a "midterm grade?"
5. My professor just sent me an email saying that there is no way I can pass her class. What should I do?

Top Ten Advising Questions cont.

6. My advisor gave me a list of classes, but how do I figure out what times the classes are and how to actually register?

7. What should I take since the classes I talked to my advisor about are full now?

8. I signed up for an online class and I just got an email that says I need to pay \$900 for it immediately, or I will be dropped. What's going on?

9. Does it matter if I take 4 classes or 5 classes a semester? They're both full time, right?

10. It says I have a hold on my account. What does that mean?

Use your resources, we're here to help!

- Call us before or during advising: **978-665-3151**.
- Set up a one-on-one meeting prior to the advising period.
- Attend the Advising Refresher Session prior to the advising period.

Group Case Study: Sarah

Sarah is a first year student who has been assigned to you as an advisee. During her registration advising appointment, she shares that although she is enjoying her major coursework, she has been feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work she needs to do for classes and has been falling behind. Recently, she has had several absences, is having difficulty focusing during classes, and is spending a lot of time worrying about everything. She was a high achieving student in high school and is feeling discouraged by the grades and feedback she has received in her courses so far. Her grades on assignments during the first few weeks of the semester have been in the 75-80 range, which, for her, is unacceptable. She has met some people in her dorm and in her classes, but she doesn't feel comfortable talking to them about her struggles because they all seem to be happy and doing well in their classes. She is worried that she does not have what it takes to be successful in college.

Key Issues:

- Anxiety interfering with completing work and attending class
- Difficulty transitioning to college
- Fixed mindset
- Possible lack of awareness of resources to help her

Action Steps:

- Normalize struggle during first year of college
- File a CARE team Report
- Refer to Counseling Services
- Refer to CCAC for academic coaching (time management, prioritizing tasks, working on growth mindset skills)

Break-out Discussion

At your table, discuss your assigned case study, considering the following questions:

- What are the key issues?
- What are possible action steps?

Case Study 1: Taylor

Taylor is a first semester junior. They have been doing alright in all their major classes and are on track for graduation within four years. When you ask how the semester is going so far, they say, “Classes are going well, but I’m just not sure I made the right choice about my major.” They are worried that they will not be able to find a job with the major they have chosen. They have a lot of family pressure to be financially successful post-college and picked their major initially because it sounded like a solid career path. They also feel like switching majors isn’t an option because it’s “too late,” plus they don’t know what else they would switch to. They like their major classes, but have no idea what they can do after college with their degree. They are really concerned that they may have made the wrong choice and are stuck now.

Key Issues:

- Does not understand the versatility of their major/a liberal arts degree
- Assumption that there is only one type of career for each major, does not understand the fluidity of the long term career path
- Has not explored career options through experience/exposure
- False assumptions about earning potential in particular careers

Action Steps:

- Ask probing questions
- Build trusting relationships: offer support and affirmation of fears. Share personal stories of career path
- Explore career options within major
- Explore other major options/refer to CCAC

Case Study 2: Abigail

Abigail is one of your advisees. She was on academic probation last semester, but was able to finish in good standing and even made Dean's List. Abigail comes in for advising and you see that she has two zeroes for midterm deficiency grades. When you ask what is going on, she explains that she has not been doing as much work this semester, since she is spending a lot of time applying for jobs. When you approach the idea of redistributing time, she mentions that she needs money to pay for housing over break. She explains that her usual housing has fallen through and without working, she will not be able to afford to stay on campus, and has no other place to go.

Key Issues:

- Homelessness
- Poor time management and self-regulation skills
- In jeopardy of ending up on probation or warning
- Financial stress

Action Steps:

- File a CARE team Report
- Refer to CCAC (academic coaching and job search support)
- Ask probing questions to find out more detail

Case Study 3: Greg

Greg, one of your advisees, is a first year student majoring in Exercise and Sports Science. Greg comes to see you about his mid-term deficiency grades in A&P I and Gen Bio I. Greg is deeply discouraged. He says that he loves his Intro to Exercise Science course, but he doesn't think he has what it takes to succeed in his other science courses. "I've never been a math person," he explains. He feels like he underestimated how science-intensive his major would be. Over the course of your conversation about his academic struggle, it becomes clear that Greg has poor study habits. When you ask him if he's considered changing majors, he says that he can't imagine doing anything that isn't related to health & fitness. He says he's considering taking the spring semester off to, "try to figure stuff out."

Key Issues:

- Fixed mindset
- Feels discouraged
- Making assumptions about what is needed to succeed in this major

Action Steps:

- Encourage a growth mindset
- Ask probing questions about student's study skills and habits
- Refer to CCAC (academic coaching)
- Refer to Tutor Center

Case Study 4: Micah

Micah, a Hispanic male freshman in a STEM major, had a high school GPA of 2.7, but placed into college level math after testing. He is taking pre-calculus in the fall term and earning a high grade, and he is doing well in all but one of his other general education classes. Late in the fall term, however, he comes to your office hours and explains that he is thinking of withdrawing from school. He has a hold on his account because he owes a balance on his fall bill and he did not complete the necessary financial aid paperwork. Apart from this, when you question him on why he is interested in withdrawing, he is vague about the reason.

Key Issues:

- Borderline high school GPA
- Registration hold
- Disconnect between high achievement and desire to leave

Action Steps:

- Ask probing questions about high school performance/study habits
- Support student in building academic capital
- Refer to financial aid/student accounts
- Model self-efficacy and advocacy

Questions?