



**Fitchburg State University  
Professional Development  
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**Strategies for Managing a Large  
Advisee Load**

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# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ *It is the people who come face-to-face with students on a regular basis who provide the positive growth experiences for students that enable them to identify their goals and talents and learn how to put them to use. The caring attitude of college personnel is viewed as the most potent retention force on a campus.*
- ▶ (Noel, L, Levitz, R., & Saluri, D. (Eds) *Increasing student retention*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. p. 17 1985)

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ Quotes from NACDA Site

- ❖ "An effective advising program is one prime factor in increasing student retention. . . . Students who receive effective academic advising tend to feel positive about the institution as a whole" Noel, L. (Ed.). (1978). *Reducing the Dropout Rate*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- ❖ "Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience." Light, R.J. (2001) *Making the most of college*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ Advising defined:
- ▶ “dynamic relationship between a student and adviser” Freeman, Lynn
- ▶ “The basic purpose of advising is to assist students and meet their various needs” Mier, Carrie

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ Goals of Advising

- ❑ Ensure that the student has the necessary credits and/or courses to graduate in a timely fashion
- ❑ The advising process is a time for the professor to try and create a bond between the student and advisor as well as between the student and the school.
- ❑ Poor advising may lead to the student either failing out of school or simply leaving, it may also create bad feelings between the student and the professor, and/or the school.

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

▶ **Comprehensive academic advising shall follow the developmental advising hierarchy, defined as:**

- exploration of life goals, values, abilities, interests, limitations
- exploration of vocational/career goals
- Selection and design of academic major or program of study
- selection of courses
- scheduling classes

Freeman, Lynn

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ So, all of this is good
- ▶ How do you manage this with a large advising load and little time??
- ▶ FSU: by contract 30 advisees – reality many majors have too many students and too little faculty
- ✓ CJ for eg. Can range from 45 to some semesters, 60 - 80

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ First item is DO NOT LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!!!!
- It is important that program faculty ranks never diminish while your program is growing in number of students.



# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ Ideally: advising should be done 1 on 1
- ▶ Why?
- ▶ Well, see info previous slides
- ▶ So, what do we do?

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ❖ Consider, if feasible: **Mandatory Group Advising Orientation** prior to Advising period. (Department Level)
    - Explain:
      - Course sequence,
      - GPA requirements,
      - How to read degree works, what does it tell you
      - Explanation of advising – what is it, how does it help you, what should YOU (the student) do to prepare
      - handouts/Blackboard: compilation of above for students to access
- THE ADVISOR SHOULD, OF COURSE, KNOW THIS AS WELL

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ Proactive Advising

- ❖ Communicate with advisees early in semester:
  - A welcome message, introduce self, where office is, maybe basics of advising
  - Talk with advisees in classes
  - Prepared handout on advising to e-mail to students prior to advising

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ . It is important that you pound this message into the students head---
- ❖ “If I am your adviser, make an appointment for advising and be at that appointment.”
- ❖ If I am not your advisor, go to your advisor and make an advising appointment and be at that appointment.
- ❖ If you do not know your advisor, call your program/department secretary and obtain that name and go to your advisor and make an advising appointment and be at that appointment.

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ While emails appear to be the panacea (cure-all) as related to this issue...it is not. Many of our students do not really attend to their email as we would assume they do. Several have indicated that they do not or cannot read all of that s\*\*t!!

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ Advising by wandering around (Peters and Waterman 1982)
  - ❑ Helping out your overloaded program faculty members as well as students that need late advising.
  - ❑ If they are searching for their advisor and you are there, take care of it as others have done for you. Just remember to forward the record to the student's advisor.

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ Pre-advising for those that do not come in prepared and seem to be those that come in for advising after missing one, two or three appointments.

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ The Advising Process

- ❖ Since additional resources are not likely in the current environment, we must be more resourceful
- ❖ Preparation is key, we prep for classes, we must prep for advising



# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ Setting up Advising

- ❖ How many advisees do you have, how will you get the word out to them, how much time do you have for meeting advisees (there is never enough)
- ❖ First: who are your advisees; how many do you have; need to schedule meetings around classes/departments and other meetings/service work/research time/R+R (?)
- ❖ Check Web 4 look at your advisee list, good starting point

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ The Appointment Process

- ❖ Once you know how many, you can set up your appointments. I schedule 20 minutes for each, leave time in between for runovers and personal necessity.
- ❖ Use of technology: I prefer Sign-up Genius, you can use SSC or any other method that you are comfortable with. Consider: student comfort and likelihood of use. (Have had good luck with Sign-up genius)
- ❖ Once process is in place, notifications begin
- ❖ I keep a list of advisees, check off as each responds and makes appointment.

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ The Appointment Process

- ❖ I send reminder e-mail to those who have who do not respond
- ❖ Seek out in classes
- ❖ Ask other CJ Professors

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ Prepping for the Appointment

- I remind students to look at their Degree Works and see what they need (this doesn't always work)
- My strategy – in morning see what appointments I have that day, I keep a note book, look at degree works for each students, make notes on following:
  - how many credits earned and needed for graduation;
  - what courses needed, required and elective, are they on track to graduate on time; LA&S requirements met or on track/Math requirement
  - overall GPA, is graduation in jeopardy;
  - Holds, other issues student should be aware of
  - check SSC, any other relevant info that might be helpful

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ Availability
- ▶ While many strategies may facilitate the process, the main aspect from my perspective is availability. And, as mentioned before, many problems can impede availability. It is for this reason I continue to make myself available via email as well as text so they can make career inquiries or just have a general information exchange.

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ▶ The Advising Appointment

- By prepping ahead, time can be saved as you are ready for the process
- Phone advising: Can be helpful for commuter students, though not ideal, have done on occasion. Important to follow-up
- Group advising – Saves time, but is it best for students, lacks personal touch. May still have to meet with some students individually.

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

## ► An Idea

### ❖ Thoughts to revise Advising:

- ❑ Change it to four weeks
- ❑ Advise Seniors first week – they register for classes at week's end
- ❑ Advise Juniors second week –register for classes at week's end
- ❑ Advise Sophomores third week – register for classes at week's end
- ❑ Advise Freshmen fourth week – they register for classes at week's end

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ Advantages:

- Easier to manage

- More incentives for students to come in for Advising

- Real – time advising – you will not be putting students into classes that they cannot get into – you will see seats list as it is

- This will also save you time “postadvising”: not having students come back because they could not get into classes

- NOTE: students do not have to seek advising during their class period, can come in later, but would face risk of not getting their classes

- THOUGHTS/DISCUSSION



# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

▶ YOUR COMMENTS/THOUGHTS

▶ WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

▶ OTHER IDEAS

# Strategies for Managing a Large Advisee Load

- ▶ No easy solution, no matter what you do will involve time and work
- ▶ BY trying to manage the process can hopefully make life easier

# References and Resources

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