

providing daily market information to radio stations where credit is given to the Agriculture unit.

As faculty interact and do more, they see more avenues to pursue, and they have to make choices for the most productive use of time and resources.

The challenge is a head of us. We are so inexperienced but we're gaining it quickly. We must, and I'm confident we will, find where we have our comparative advantages. Concerned faculty are vital to the degree we succeed in this task.

Getting to Know Advisees Effectively

Joseph E. Williams

Getting to know advisees effectively is a very broad but important topic. Webster defines effective as: "ready for service or action." Effective academic advising, therefore, requires advisers who are ready for service. From my perspective there are two essential components for effective advising or a state of advising readiness. The first component is a thorough knowledge of areas in which advisers are called on or are responsible for giving advice. The second, no less important than the first, is the ability to counsel students effectively and develop a good adviser-advisee relationship.

In most academic institutions, advisers receive very little adviser training or instruction and advising receives low professional priority and recognition. Although effective academic advising requires training and study, academic advising is looked upon by some faculty as an "extra duty" which is expected of them. Yet, advising is one of the most important and often overlooked responsibilities of educators. Advising can and should be both a professionally and personally rewarding experience.

The purpose of this paper is to identify those areas where advisers need knowledge and to outline methods of improving the knowledge base in each area. Procedures are identified and discussed which are effective in counseling students and maintaining a good adviser-advisee relationship. These procedures complement the role and mission of the academic adviser in supporting the achievement of academic excellence by students. The adviser's knowledge base and counseling skills are important in getting to know advisees effectively.

Major Knowledge Areas

The knowledgeable adviser must be able to answer questions or refer students to people who can assist in solving the unanswered questions or problems. Adviser skills are required to answer questions that may range from routine enrollment questions to those which go beyond the adviser's level of knowledge or competence. Key subject matter areas where advisers need a solid knowledge base must first be discussed.

An invited paper by Williams, professor and chairman of the Undergraduate and Curriculum Committee, Department of Agricultural Economics, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078-0505, during the 33rd Annual NACTA Conference, June 14-17, 1987, at the University of Missouri, Columbia, MO.

A. Departmental Course and Instructor Familiarity

Advisers should be familiar with current policies and administrative procedures within the department which relate to advising, academic matters, and course requirements. Advisers need to be knowledgeable concerning the frequency with which courses are taught, course content, prerequisite(s), and sequencing. This information is important when deciding which courses can be substituted or are essential in meeting the university, college, and/or departmental requirements for graduation. Knowledge about course content is valuable when advising students on courses to take in meeting career or personal objectives.

Periodic course reviews can familiarize advisers with the content of department courses. At Oklahoma State University, we have found it very beneficial to have course reviews every two to three years. The instructor of each course discusses or provides an overview of his course including objectives, texts, references, material and concepts taught as well as testing procedures with the teaching and advising faculty. Course reviews are typically accomplished in a one day session scheduled at a place outside the office yet within immediate telephone reach to minimize distractions. All course outlines have been compiled and are distributed to faculty in the form of a handbook.

One method of improving the knowledge base concerning non-Agricultural Economics courses is through seminars and written communications with teaching and/or advising faculty of other departments.

B. University Policies and Procedures

Two useful methods of educating academic advisers about University policies and procedures are used at Oklahoma State University. First, a university wide committee developed and distributed an easily updated American Adviser's Handbook. The handbook was organized and written so as to be of maximum usefulness to academic advisers. The handbook provides information on policies, procedures, forms, and routing steps which are not available in the university catalog. The second method of educating academic advisers is again through department or college level meetings.

C. University Student Services

The university community places many expectations and demands on students in the course of identifying, developing, and achieving academic and personal goals. These expectations and demands may

create questions, pressures, problems, and/or needs for the individual student. It is important that the adviser assist or be able to refer the advisee to the correct place in the university system (or in some cases outside the university system) for assistance or direction. Areas in addition to academic matters where advisers need basic knowledge include: (1) available counseling services; (2) financial aid information; (3) student housing; (4) food services; (5) student health service; and (6) information concerning student organizations and student life.

Advisers can gain information and wisdom in each of these areas over time as they are forced to deal with problems or questions. Perhaps a better way to gain knowledge is to provide readily available lists of names and telephone numbers of persons who can assist in solving presented problems. This listing provides a very efficient means of reference for the academic adviser.

Seminars and discussion sessions where directors of various types of student services discuss the objectives and functions of their respective areas are also a useful way to gain insights into available services.

D. Career Development and Job Placement

One of the best ways to recruit and motivate top quality undergraduate students is to have a viable job market for graduates. Even with a depressed agricultural economy there are jobs for the "good students." Good jobs beget good students; good students beget more good students, and the adviser is a catalyst in this process.

One of the most important and basic areas in which advisers must be knowledgeable is career development. Information concerning job opportunities and requirements is essential in developing curriculum, advising, and educating students with respect to career opportunities and course selection.

The adviser needs to be in contact continually with people responsible for recruiting and hiring agricultural economics graduates. One efficient way to gain insights is to dine with the potential employer or perhaps to invite the interviewer back for a special meeting with advisers or student organizations to discuss a particular profession. At Oklahoma State University, advisers are often requested to go to lunch with interviewers. Typically these arrangements are handled through the Dean's Office. Another method used to keep abreast of job opportunities and career development is to survey former graduates of your department. Determine in what areas too much or too little training was received. Use this information in advising students and designing curriculum.

Effectively Counseling Students

Being an effective academic adviser, motivating and directing the advisee to achieve academic excellence is an art. Following is a list of counseling suggestions that might improve the advisee-adviser relationship and complement the role of the academic adviser in advising students effectively.

A. Developing Rapport and Gaining Confidence of Students

One of the most important tasks of the adviser is to develop rapport and gain the confidence of the student. Dwyer states that none of the services an adviser can provide will be effective without good adviser-student rapport. The student must be aware and feel the adviser has a definite interest in him and that the adviser is going to assist him in identifying and achieving his academic, career and personal goals. The advisee must feel recognized as an individual.

One way to assist in gaining the student's confidence and developing rapport is to learn and understand the student's background. This can partially be accomplished by having the student, during an initial advising session, complete a student information form that addresses questions concerning background, training, hobbies and interests, and present goals. This information is also useful in planning academic programs and considering course waivers and substitutions.

B. Show a Real Interest in Students

Don't sign enrollment forms without serious thought. Insure that the student is not taking an improper course load, caution the student about too many labs in one day, too many wasted hours during the day or week, and course overloads. Insure that the student has had all the prerequisite classes required. Take advantage of course substitutions and waivers to insure the student is getting the best education possible that is consistent with individual abilities, academic ambitions, and personal goals. It is tempting to sign trial study forms without looking (or thinking) which classes the advisee is enrolling in. Don't be afraid to request special waivers and substitutions of "sacred" courses when it is to the student's best interest.

C. Plan Programs According to Ability

Don't overlook the need to motivate and challenge advisees. Most students will take the road of least difficulty in obtaining a degree regardless of major or option. Where opportunities arise and are appropriate, question students as to why they aren't taking more challenging courses.

Alternatively, we see students who are overachievers, or who may not possess the prior training and skills necessary to complete the specific course or degree program. Don't allow students to overload as a function of ability or time devoted to being a student when considering competing work, family demands and student activities.

D. Endeavor to Develop Self-Reliance and Maturity

Advisees confront advisers with many questions and problems. If the adviser can provide a clearcut answer as in the case of university regulations and procedures, then do so. If the question or problem is one where the adviser is not going to accept the consequences of future developments, then let the advisee make the decision and accept the respon-

sibility. Discuss alternative actions and possible outcomes, but let the advisee make the decision. Making one's own decisions and accepting responsibility for the outcome develops maturity. If the advisee makes a decision and the outcome is unfavorable, let the student accept the consequences but make sure the door is open for further discussion if needed.

E. Appointment Summaries

The academic adviser needs to have considerable information readily available when counseling a student. A summary of adviser-advisee contacts is something few advisers keep but all should. This summary provides an excellent base of knowledge when advising a specific student. Information needs to be available concerning the nature of each visit, who said what, or what was committed or accomplished. This is extremely useful, particularly in protecting yourself against bad advising or in recognizing problems, difficulties, or trends that the advisee may be encountering or developing. The summaries also provide a history or documentation of events or agreements that can be useful when questions arise later or students change advisers.

F. Be Professional

Advising, as stated earlier, is one of the most important responsibilities we have as faculty. You must be professional if you are to advise effectively. Three areas of professionalism must be considered. First is the concept of objectivity. The adviser is not a judge. It is the adviser's responsibility, as hard as it may be, to remain neutral and not side with the advisee or other faculty members.

The second area involves the misuse of information. As adviser you have access to a considerable amount of privileged information concerning each advisee. Insure that this information is not released to other students, secretaries, or faculty as a result of "careless talk."

The third area concerns "self-serving advising." Remember the adviser is to assist the student in identifying and achieving academic, career and other personal goals. Sometimes when advising students it is tempting to provide "self-serving" advice. Be objective! Advise students with respect to their best interest.

G. Allocating Time for Advising

Faculty have many responsibilities that compete for limited faculty time when considering advising, teaching, research, extension and/or administrative commitments and responsibilities. Advising is important and sufficient time ought to be devoted to the matter. Time should be allocated to not only learning and reviewing areas of knowledge that advisers need to know but also for advising students. There are at least two schools of thought concerning the availability of the adviser with respect to students. Weigers states that "you must put your students interests above yours much, if not all the time to maximize the benefits of your advising efforts." Weigers quotes Rotary International's motto of "Service above self."

My views on advising are in conflict with those of Weigers. Advising is one of my most important professional and personal responsibilities; however, it does not always receive "top" priority above all teaching and research efforts. It is important that my advisees realize that I too have other responsibilities. There is, in fact, a very high professional opportunity cost associated with the time spent advising students. My advisees know that I am always available and willing to work with them. but I also have other commitments which demand my attention and time. Even though I have an "open door" policy with respect to advising, I am not reluctant to request that an advisee set up an appointment to discuss the issue at hand if I'm not in a position to visit at that immediate time. "Quality time" associated with each advising session is important. This is important in developing rapport and gaining confidence of the advisee. Once an appointment is set, I insure that the allocated time is uninterrupted, available and devoted to the advisee.

H. Advisee and Adviser Expectations

Getting to know advisees effectively is complemented if both the advisee and adviser function assuming certain expectations of knowledge and responsibilities for both the adviser and advisee. The adviser-advisee relationship is enhanced if both have a clearcut understanding of the purpose the academic adviser fulfills and the preparation and acceptance of responsibility of the advisee. The expectations are outlined in our departmental undergraduate handbook. I find it convenient and important to review these expectations with each of my advisees during usually the first or second visit. The expectations are:

- A. What the advisee can expect from their adviser.
 1. Concern for me and my welfare as an individual.
 2. Accurate information concerning academic programs, requirements, policies and procedures.
 3. Assistance in the exploration of career, educational and academic goals.
 4. Assistance in the exploration of educational options and the planning of the advisee's academic program.
 5. Assistance in the selection and scheduling of courses.
 6. Assistance with the processing of academic forms required for enrollment, changing enrollment and graduation.
 7. Assistance with implementing an official degree check prior to my last semester in school.
 8. Referrals when needed to other support services, i.e. student health, financial aid, etc.
 9. Confidentiality concerning all personal and private matters.

- B. What advisers can expect from their advisees.
1. Thoughtful consideration of education and academic goals.
 2. Familiarity with the advisee's academic program including applicable requirements.
 3. Acceptance of responsibility for the advisee's choices and decisions concerning academic and educational goals.
 4. Questions when the advisee feels a lack of sufficient information. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
 5. Notification when the advisee encounters academic or other problems where the adviser might be an information or solution source.
 6. Careful reading and appropriate responses to communications from the adviser, department, college, or university.
 7. Consideration for other students.
 8. Time for the adviser to be able to fulfill certain advisement responsibilities rather than expecting "just a signature."
 9. An effort to become aware of important deadlines.
 10. An awareness that the adviser has other professional responsibilities and obligations in addition to academic advising.

Summary

The academic adviser is an extremely important and special individual to most undergraduate students. The adviser is the primary individual responsible for assisting and motivating the student who is attempting to identify, develop, and achieve academic, career and personal goals.

Certain knowledge areas are basic to advising. The knowledge areas include, but are not limited to, (1) department and course familiarity; (2) university services available to fulfill special academic or personal needs; (3) university policies and procedures; and (4) career development and job placement. In addition, this paper also identifies and discusses procedures that are effective in developing a good adviser-advisee relationship. The procedures include: (1) developing rapport and gaining student confidence; (2) showing interest in students; (3) recognizing the abilities of students and planning programs accordingly; (4) developing self-reliance and motivating students; (5) advising summaries; (6) being professional; (7) allocating time for advising and (8) identifying and knowing adviser/advisee expectations.

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Advising Transfer Students

Harold G. Severance

Sally Felker, a student writing an article "If You Were My Faculty Advisor," stated: "Please do not give up on me. If you do, I fear I may give up on myself. Believe in me so that I may believe in myself" (Bohm, 1978). All faculty advisors, agricultural ones are no exception, should heed the plea. So often, we advise the student, then, tend to forget them.

The thing that makes it (advising) all worthwhile is that probably no one is more valued in the career of a student than a knowledgeable, compassionate advisor. (Hoops, 1983).

Advising agricultural students at the community college level has been going on since four year institutions have accepted the transfer student. Many problems arise as to the nature of advising, the programs set forth, the receiving institution's guidelines, the student, the adviser, etc. The problems arising, hopefully, lead to positive outcomes for a student providing advisers do their job. At Cloud

Summary of remarks by Severance of Cloud County Community College, Concordia, KS, presented at annual NACTA conference, Columbia, MO, June 16, 1987