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## The Stress from Advising a Large Number of Students

- Advising students requires a large amount of time in addition to a full time work load (teaching/research/extension). Advising student organizations usually requires evenings/weekends from home and family.
- Dealing with problems (both academic and personal) can be exhausting. Handling last minute requests creates additional stress.
- Hours spent advising students are often not factored into faculty appointment allocations (assumed to be a part of teaching duties).
- Time devoted to student advising may not influence promotion/tenure decisions and/or affect salary increases.
- Faculty can become burned out and even lose interest in student advising.

## Warning Signs of Potential Student Advising Burnout

1. Limit available office hours to students.
2. Tend to be impatient when advising or visiting with students.
3. Reluctant to return phone calls or answer emails from students.
4. Do not offer extra help to students or willingness to spend time.
5. Rush students through the advising process.
6. Not interested in sharing time with students in regards to their personal problems and concerns.
7. Avoid attending student activities on campus.
8. Tend to give the importance of student advising only "lip service" without a real personal commitment.

A faculty survey was conducted of the Lawrence K. Crowe Outstanding Advising Award winners in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to measure their commitment to undergraduate student advising and its rewards.

**Question: What is the greatest personal satisfaction/reward you gain from student advising?**

Responses: *"Seeing students develop from immature high schoolers to confident professionals." "Having my students graduate with minimal problems." "They thank me for my help." "Congratulating students and their parents at graduation." "Watching the growth young men and women make during college." "Developing a trusting relationship with my advisees to accomplish their goals."*

**Question: What motivates you to be a good student adviser with a strong passion for helping students?**

Responses: *"Helping students to be successful and to become campus leaders." "Thank You notes from students and parents." "I love the hugs when they say their final good-byes." "Being a role model to my students." "Helping students make decisions and evaluate the associated consequences." "Hoping to pass along the big impact that I gained from having great advisors during my college years." "My driving force is to advise students in a manner that is efficient and of the highest quality."*

**Question: How would you summarize your philosophy for student advising?**

Responses: *"Be knowledgeable for all aspects of their undergraduate education." "Helping students to be more efficient on their own as they develop and mature in becoming productive and educated adults." "Be more involved with students than just helping to develop class schedules." "We are here for a student's benefit (not vice versa). Some advisors forget that." "First become familiar with a student's needs by being a careful and active listener." "My approach is to consider what I would want for my own child."*

**Question: How have you avoided the feeling of being burned out by students?**

Responses: *"Focus on my successful graduates and those who are grateful for my help and direction." "Not a problem. Students offer too much variety to ever become burned out." "At the end of the Spring Semester I am exhausted from students and their needs -- but come Fall Semester I am ready to go again. Thank heaven for summers." "This has never been a problem." "Meeting with students actually energizes me." "The attitude of a student who doesn't care or fails to even try burns me out."*

**Question: Any words of advice or wisdom to share with other undergraduate advisers?**

Responses: *"Always keep the advisee at the center of your attention." "Students are a precious asset. We need to realize we are the final stages in their learning. What we do will impact them for a long time." "Impact students in the same positive manner just as we still remember our professors who had such a positive impact on us." "Always keep in mind what it is like to be an undergraduate student. It's even harder now." "Challenge students realistically beyond their anticipated level of achievement." "Never take it personally if a student changes advisors."*



## Tips for Avoiding Faculty Burnout from Student Advising

1. Be willing to shut your office door when faced with deadlines.
2. Understand the limits of your time. Learn to say "no" in a positive manner.
3. Make effective use of your time when advising students. Develop worksheets which outline curriculum requirements to facilitate the advising process.
4. When time permits take part in student campus activities and learn to enjoy these experiences.
5. Treasure your personal relationships with students. Savor the special moments of appreciation that students share.

