

Shared Advising – The Role of the Faculty Mentor

Introduction

Research in the literature on student retention emphasizes the need to create community and groups that involve changes in the situational/institutional climate while simultaneously involving students in skill – and interest- building activities. This includes mentoring programs in which students and faculty develop a relationship where guidance and modeling are provided. Paine College embraces the concept of academic advising as articulated in the preamble of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), that “academic advising is integral to fulfilling the teaching and learning mission of higher education.” Through academic advising, students learn to become members of the Paine College academic community, to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students, and to prepare to be educated citizens of a democratic society and a global community. Academic advising engages students beyond their own world views, while acknowledging their individual characteristics, values, and motivations as they enter, move through, and exit Paine College.

Roles and Responsibility

The student learning outcomes of academic advising are guided by Paine College’s mission, goals, curriculum and co-curriculum. These outcomes articulate what students will demonstrate, know, value, and do as a result of participating in academic advising. After participating in the shared advising process Paine College students will:

- articulate the meaning of higher education and the intent of the discipline’s curriculum
- demonstrate an understanding of professional, ethical, legal, and social issues and responsibilities related to the discipline.
- recognize the need for and an ability to engage in continuing professional development
- engage in a diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover facts or principles, and increase the sum of knowledge, enhance design, or enrich artistic ability.
- articulate the meaning of higher education and the intent of the discipline’s curriculum
- cultivate the intellectual habits that lead to a lifetime of learning
- behave as citizens who engage in the wider world around them

Faculty mentors engage students starting in the freshman year. Within a department, faculty members can be divided in any manner that best complements the department (i.e. students assigned to faculty by concentrations, students assigned to faculty by classification, students randomly assigned). Regardless of the assignments faculty mentors should engage in the following activities:

- hold monthly meetings with all students assigned to your mentoring group to talk about topics such as: problems they may be encountering in courses, concentration, motivation, time management, organization, note taking, textbook reading, stress management, test preparation, test taking, academic course work, opportunities beyond the campus (i.e study abroad, internships, service opportunities), research skill development, on-going research, and professional networking.
- sponsor skill-building workshops, schedule guest speakers, discuss interesting and controversial issues in the field, and expose students to resources in the discipline.
- meet at least once per semester with each student in your mentoring group individually to discuss academic goals, issues and challenges that the student may be experiencing, opportunities to gain experience in the discipline, research interests, develop plans to attend graduate/professional school, career opportunities in the discipline.

Freshmen/Sophomore Activities

- goal setting
- identifying experiential learning opportunities (i.e. service activities, study abroad, internships)
- time management
- identifying research interests

Junior/Senior Activities

- research skill building
- presenting research ideas and findings¹ (on and off campus)
- networking
- developing professional dossier (i.e. resume, letters of reference)
- applying for professional positions in the discipline
- applying for graduate/professional school

Record Keeping

Faculty mentors should keep records of all students and ensure that students have copies of all signed documents. A complete file should include:

- A signed mentoring agreement
- Updated mentoring goals worksheets (one annually)
- Student self-assessment form
- Contact log

References

Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) – <http://www.cur.org/>

Department of Undergraduate Studies, San Bernardino State University

Nagada B.A., Gregerman, S.R., Jonides, J., von Hippel, W., and Lerner, J.S. (1998) Undergraduate student-faculty research partnerships affect student retention, *The Review of Higher Education*, 22, No. 1, pp. 55-72.

National Association of Academic Advising (NACADA) - <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/>

¹ All juniors and seniors will present their research as a part of Paine College's Research Day during the spring semester of each academic year.