

# Principles of Advising at Nashville State

## **Academic Advising**

The academic advising of students is an integral part of the faculty's teaching obligations. The basic tasks of any academic advisor are to develop a thorough knowledge of the institution and academic programs, policies, and services that are available to students, while attempting to perceive and understand the needs of students. By understanding the institution in such manner, advisors may guide students and match their needs with available resources. Ideally, the advising process will provide students with specific and accurate information, advice, and counsel and will enable the student to develop a personal relationship with his or her advisor.

## **Referrals**

Advisors should know when to urge students to see someone else to explore alternatives. Studies have shown that students are far more likely to follow up on an institutional referral if the advisor assists directly in making the original contact.

## **Advising Undecided Students**

The advisor of a student who is uncertain about his or her major should be prepared to explore with the student his or her life goals and education/career goals and refer the student to institutional resources which can help the student reach a tentative decision about choice of major. NSCC resources may include the Career Center or Student Success Center where students can receive assistance in evaluating their strengths and areas of interest.

## **Advising Majors**

The primary responsibilities of the major advisor are to give specific advice about the academic requirements of the student's chosen major and to oversee the student's completion of general education and degree requirements. This includes:

- reviewing the advisee's transcript and the major plan
- monitoring the student's progress in completing major requirements and general degree requirements each semester
- ensuring that the student will complete the required number of credits to graduate
- providing guidance about the applicability of courses that a student may have taken (or will take) at another college or university, particularly for those students in TTP programs

## **Characteristics of Effective Advisors**

Advisors who possess the following characteristics are most successful with students:

- are interested in advising
- demonstrate a concerned and caring attitude toward advisees
- exhibit effective interpersonal and communication skills
- are available to advisees
- have frequent contact with advisees
- are knowledgeable of institutional regulations, policies, offerings, and procedures
- monitor advisee progress
- use appropriate information sources and refer when necessary
- engage in academic planning versus simply course scheduling

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Advisors**

- Help students define and develop realistic educational career plans through schedule planning for each semester. Each student should have an up-to-date academic schedule plan through to graduation.
- (First-time Freshmen advisees) Meet with advisee during orientation to assist student with initial adjustment to community college academic life. Special sessions should be scheduled throughout the first academic year.
- Assist students in preparing an academic plan of study consistent with their abilities and interests.
- Monitor progress toward educational/career goals and communicate at least once each semester to review the progress toward completing the proposed academic program and to discuss grades and other performance indicators.
- Interpret and provide rationale for institutional policies, procedures, and requirements.
- Follow-up with the advisee on any report of unsatisfactory work (Early Alert System notifications, notice of poor attendance, notice of FA and/or failing grades, incomplete grades from past semester(s), etc.). Special attention should be paid to students who are placed on academic probation.
- Inform and, if necessary, refer students to other institutional resources when academic, attitudinal, attendance, or other personal problems require intervention by other professionals (e.g., Vice President of Student Affairs).
- Proactively contact and be available for student advisees on a regular basis. Office hours should be posted on the advisor's office door and/or in other appropriate locations (course shell, syllabus) at the beginning of the semester.
- Attend advising training as required by the Dean.
- Serve as an advisor mentor to new advisors as assigned by the Dean.
- Inform advisees of their responsibilities in the advising process.

### **Advisee Responsibilities**

The advisee is an equal partner in the advising process. Advisees are ultimately responsible for their educational choices and decisions. Advisees who demonstrate the following characteristics will experience successful academic advising and planning:

- Clarify personal values, abilities, interests, and academic and career goals.
- Contact and schedule regular appointments with the advisor each semester as required or when in need of assistance
- Prepare for advising sessions and bring appropriate resources or materials
- Maintain an Advising Portfolio which includes an academic plan, a degree advising sheet, a list of outside time constraints such as a work schedule, and other details.
- Come prepared to registration advising sessions with a planned schedule for the forthcoming semester.
- Become knowledgeable and adhere to institutional policies, procedures, and requirements.
- Read NSCC email and other important communications from the college and advisor.

This document was modified from a document originally published by Purchase College: State University of New York.