

Lawrence Technological University

Introduction to Faculty Advising

August 2012

The 2012 Lawrence Tech Faculty Handbook defines academic advising as a responsibility other than academic teaching which are expected of all faculty members (Section 2.1.3.a):

Student advising. Advising consists of providing mentoring and guidance to the student in selecting courses, academic majors or minors, career objectives, employment and graduate schools; or, in seeking University support services, but does not include psychological counseling. Advising shall take into account all University options open to the student, including alternative programs for those interested in changing major or concentration. To this end, the University will provide faculty with appropriate information and training.

The advising function also includes receiving and acting appropriately on information from students relevant to the improvement of University education, student service, protection of students and employees, and quality control.

The advising relationship is subject to laws, regulations, and University policy on student privacy, which are summarized in the Advisor's Handbook, but is not privileged or confidential as a legal matter, and is subject to mandatory reporting.

The "Advisor's Handbook" referenced above consists of a series of web pages found on the Provost's Web site provost.ltu.edu in the "Faculty Advising" section.

Definition of Academic Advising

1. Because it is a process, academic advising is on-going and multifaceted. It is more than a one-time conference with a student; rather, it is a continuous process of student and advisor interaction.
2. Because it is an exchange, academic advising is the responsibility of both student and advisor. The advisor's part of this exchange is to facilitate communication, to coordinate learning experiences through course selection, career planning and academic progress review, and to refer students to other campus resources.
3. Because the process is student-centered, academic advising helps students to understand themselves better.
4. Because it deals with the maximizing of potential, academic advising helps students define realistic life, educational, career and personal goals and develop plans to realize those goals.
5. Because it involves decision-making, academic advising assists students in receiving information, considering available options and making choices.

6. The underlying assumption of this definition is that academic advising is developmental in nature. Academic advising helps students identify their life goals, acquire those skills necessary for growth and ultimately succeed in a manner unique to each student.

Goals of Academic Advising

GOAL 1 – To help students better understand themselves. Academic advising should help students both understand and accept themselves. With the help of an academic advisor, students should come to a better understanding of their values, goals, abilities, interests and limitations. The first goal of academic advising, then, is student selfknowledge.

GOAL 2 – To help students clarify life, educational, and career goals. Academic advising should help students define and develop realistic goals. Advisors, therefore, should teach students the process of goal-setting and realization. To do this requires advisors to help students relate their interests, skills, abilities and values to careers and occupations. Incorporated into this mix should be an understanding of the nature, purpose and relevance of higher education and its link to the world of work. Advisors, then, assist students in clarifying both short-term and long term educational and career goals.

Academic advising should help students select and review their academic programs. Each student's educational plan should be consistent with individual life and career goals as well as the student's unique interests and abilities. It is important when choosing their academic programs that students be provided with an organized process for exploring their educational options. When necessary, advisors should be prepared to help students explore alternative courses of action including the identification of academic alternatives and the consideration of alternative careers in line with the students' abilities and interests.

GOAL 3 – To help students select appropriate courses and other educational experiences that are most consistent with individual goals. Academic advising should help students develop a course of study which enables them to achieve their goals. Advisors should assist students in choosing courses appropriate to the students' program requirements, ability level and individual needs. Proper course selection should help students reach their educational objectives as efficiently as possible while maintaining the correct scheduling sequences. Choices of electives should also reflect the students' academic backgrounds, goals and interests.

GOAL 4 – To help interpret institutional requirements. Academic advising should not only provide students with accurate information about the university's policies, procedures and requirements, but also make sure that students understand these. It is important that advisors clearly communicate to students the correct information about degree programs, degree requirements and course offerings.

GOAL 5 – To help students be aware of available educational resources. Academic advising should assist students in becoming aware of and learning to utilize the academic resources on campus which can help them achieve their goals. Advisors should help students identify and locate on-campus resources which can provide academic assistance.

GOAL 6 –To help students evaluate their progress toward established goals. Academic advising should assist students in constant evaluation and reevaluation of progress towards goals and educational plans. Advisors, therefore, should continually help students monitor and evaluate their academic progress and help students assess their own performance. If academic difficulties occur, advisors should be prepared to assist students in

analyzing the causes of such difficulties and in finding ways to improve their performance. "Academic advising should be viewed as a continuous process of clarification and evaluation."

GOAL 7 – To encourage and facilitate student decision-making skills. Academic advising should develop the student's ability to make good decisions in the student's own best interest. Academic advisors assist students in developing decision-making skills by questioning and encouraging student decisions. Students should be encouraged to gather and evaluate information, consider their values and goals, and make decisions with a clear understanding of alternatives, limitations and possible consequences of decisions. Students should be encouraged to accept and recognize their responsibility for academic choices.

Academic advising should assist students in growth. Students should grow in self-awareness of the relationship of education to life; students should grow in their ability to set goals and establish plans to achieve those goals; and students should grow in their awareness of life extending past their college years. Academic advisors should focus on students' active awareness of and participation in their own development. Academic advisors should provide caring support to students through the growth process.

GOAL 8 – To refer students to other institutional and community support services where appropriate. Academic advising should integrate the many resources of the university to meet each student's particular educational needs and goals. To make sure that students are familiar with and make effective use of campus resources, academic advisors should identify special needs and match students to available resources. Appropriate referrals by advisors help ensure that a student's needs are met in a timely manner.

GOAL 9 – To provide student information to help improve institutional policies and procedures. Academic advisors should provide information, when requested, about their advisees to assist in campus decision-making and continuous improvement of its academic programs and services.

Guidelines for Academic Advising:

Responsibilities of the Advisee (the student):

1. Recognize personal responsibility for continuous evaluation of progress toward the objectives set by the University and assume ultimate responsibility for all academic choices.
2. Know his/her advisor. Initiate contact with the advisor and seek help on a regular basis when needed.
3. Formulate academic and social goals in order to optimize life and career choices .
4. Become acquainted with the resources at Lawrence Tech, such as the Academic Achievement Center. By calling upon such resources, the student will increase the likelihood of academic success and can better define long-range goals.
5. Become familiar with academic policies, procedures, and requirements by using the designated College Catalog and Student Handbook, current Master Schedule and the Plan of Work from the designated department.
6. Know the graduation requirements for the chosen program in order to monitor personal progress toward completion of the degree.

7. Maintain accurate and current academic records, such as copies of grade reports, add/drop transactions, major progress sheets, transfer credit evaluations and correspondence from beginning to completion of the degree program. MAINTAIN YOUR OWN FILE OF RECORDS.
8. Prepare, in advance, for every meeting with the academic advisor, and bring to each meeting the necessary supporting materials such as the General Education requirements, Plan of Work and, if registering, a tentative schedule.

Responsibilities of the Advisor (the faculty member):

1. Know the advisees that he/she is responsible for advising.
2. Clearly define advisor/advisee responsibilities for each student.
3. Become well-acquainted with each student's academic and educational needs.
4. Help evaluate a student's academic abilities (and try to match with the student's selected major).
5. Help evaluate a student's educational and career plans.
6. Actively obtain/maintain current information on each assigned student.
7. Be familiar with academic policies, procedures, requirements and forms so the student's questions about Lawrence Tech degree programs can be accurately answered.
8. Assist the student in developing course schedules and offer advice on student choices of courses and electives.
9. Provide the student with information concerning alternatives, limitations and possible outcomes of academic choices.
10. Direct the student to available campus resources (tutors, writing center, career center, etc.) according to individual needs.
11. Encourage the student to review academic progress regularly, searching for possible conflicts or omissions.
12. Study, discuss, verify, and sign the student's registration forms and schedule changes when appropriate.
13. Listen to personal (non-academic) concerns of the student. (See Limitations of Advising Responsibilities later in this section.)

Characteristics of a Good Academic Advisor

Effective academic advisors are accessible, provide accurate information, and have a caring relationship with their student advisees.

Being Accessible means:

- Make time in your schedule for students. One of the biggest concerns students have about advising is a lack of availability of their advisor. To have generous office hours and sufficient available time for your students is very important.
- Post office hours, email address and telephone extension.
- Set the length of your appointments to adequately meet the needs of your students and thoroughly explain policies and procedures when necessary.
- Leave enough time for questions. Students should be provided the opportunity to ask you questions at every conference.
- Encourage students to come in early in their academic career and early in the semester.
- Make contact with each student at least once a semester outside of registration periods. Effective advising is both long-range planning as well as immediate problem-solving.
- Encourage students to use your time regularly and frequently. Invite students to use that time. Invitations to students to come in and see you are effective in getting students in for advising.

Providing Accurate Information means:

- To see the big picture. Each piece of information you receive about or from a student should be interpreted in light of everything else you know. To provide the big picture. Give your students an integrated picture of LTV's courses, procedures, requirements and goals.
- To know academic requirements. Having a knowledge of university requirements also means being thoroughly familiar with the academic requirements and policies of your department and college.
- To understand how to use petitions to graduate, petitions for class offerings, course waiver requests, guest credit requests, additional credit requests, grade recomputation forms, and placement tests.
- To be familiar with course content and prerequisites. To be familiar with LTV's academic resources. To know where to refer students.. To act as a liaison between students, staff, faculty and administration. Take the initiative to call the appropriate office or department on behalf of the student.
- Be aware of opportunities for students such as scholarships, new courses, interdisciplinary majors, and dual degrees. Be aware of the range of programs available at LTV.

Having a Personal and Caring Relationship means:

- Listening with understanding and be willing to work with a student on academic problems. Exploring students' objectives, interests, motivation, and academic and career alternatives if necessary.
- Knowing each advisee as an individual.
- Helping students adjust to Lawrence Tech. They may be coming directly from high school or other college or resuming their education after some time away from school.

Limitations of the Advising Relationship

- You can't make decisions for your students, but you can be a sympathetic listener and you can offer alternatives for the student to consider.
- The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about life goals and educational plans rests with the individual student. The academic advisor assists by helping to identify and assess alternatives and the consequences of decisions.

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- You can't reduce the academic or employment t load of a student, but you can make any recommendations you feel appropriate.
- Academic advisors are not psychological counselors. If you become aware of serious problems, the best thing for students is to refer them to someone who has training in the required area.
- You are expected to guide, not compel students. The academic plan developed should be a collaborative effort between you and the student concerned.
- Recognize your own limitations in helping your students--you can't do everything.

Academic Advising Checklist

Faculty members: Use this for Academic Advising checklist to plan for student advising sessions. This checklist is designed to help students plan for selecting new courses in an upcoming semester, and is not all-inclusive.

1. Scheduling the advising session
 - a. E-mail or telephone message
 - b. Signup sheet online or posted on your office door
 - c. Set a policy for providing enough time between a request and the meeting to prepare
2. Preparing for the advising session
 - a. Review of e-mail from student
 - b. Current catalog, scheduling sheets, program flowcharts
 - c. BannerWeb transcript
 - d. Placement status
 - e. Probation status
 - f. COM 1001 complete or excused?
 - g. COM 1103 complete or transferred in?
 - h. Progress on core curriculum?
 - i. Math sequence: barrier to other required courses?
3. The advising meeting
 - a. When you first meet a student:
 - i. **Self-disclose.** Tell students about yourself as a person who is continually going through the process of becoming educated.
 - ii. **Personalize the University.** As a representative of the University,. you do this whenever you assist students. Academic advisors offer a relationship to students that contributes to a personalized educational experience from orientation to graduation and beyond.
 - iii. **Consider the student's perspective.** Through your listening and questioning, communicate your desire to help the student.
 - b. Gauge your initial impression of the student: are they confident, reserved, concerned, anxious?
 - c. Is the student prepared with list of issues, courses, alternatives?
 - d. Do proposed courses fit program?

- e. Are there courses that the student thinks should have been transferred but do not show on their BannerWeb transcript?
 - f. How many hours is the student working outside of class?
 - g. Select sections to fit hours available; match preferences of time, instructor if possible.
 - h. Agree on which courses the student will register for.
 - i. Clear the student to register (method varies by College).
 - j. Check for underlying problems and refer to campus resources as needed.
 - k. Make sure that the student has an active Banner account, has posted their current e-mail to Banner and Blackboard, and checks e-mail regularly.
 - l. Confirm “next steps” to be completed by both the student and the advisor.
 - m. Encourage, invite back, and emphasize availability
4. Follow up
- a. Check with the student via phone or e-mail to confirm that they have completed their assigned “next steps.”
 - b. Check on actual schedule for which student has registered.