Academic Advising

I. What is academic advising?

The Preamble to the National Academic Advising Association’s *Concept of Academic Advising* states:

> Academic advising is integral to fulfilling the teaching and learning mission of higher education. Through academic advising, students learn to become members of their higher education 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.

This brief document is worthwhile reading for all academic advisors, seasoned as well as new, and is available at [http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Core-Values-Introduction.htm](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Core-Values-Introduction.htm)

Academic advising, at both college and department levels, entails a variety of service functions, such as

- explaining admission and program requirements,
- evaluating equivalencies for transfer courses,
- evaluating applications,
- assisting with registration,
- checking completion of requirements and degrees,
- taking academic actions (probation, suspension, dismissal),
- approving forms,
- and many more.

The main function of advising, however, is to develop ongoing, developmental, teaching relationships with students, a relationship sometimes described as mentoring. Within the context of that relationship, advisors help students

- clarify life/career goals,
- develop meaningful plans to achieve those goals,
- evaluate their progress,
- resolve challenges,
- understand policies and procedures,
- connect to UHM as an institution,
- take advantage of UHM’s resources,
- engage fully in their education, and
- assume responsibility for their lives, their success, and their future.

Advising is a responsibility best shared between faculty and students. It is crucial that students learn to take full responsibility for their education and their academic progress. Advisor and student should contribute equally to the work involved in advising, from researching answers to creating academic plans. An integral part of advising is teaching students decision-making skills, but it is the student who makes the decisions.
For many students, academic advising is their primary one-on-one contact with faculty. Because students come to UHM from diverse backgrounds, advising is often their primary means for learning the culture of higher education, and advising faculty need to be conscious of what they convey.

Advisors model for students the tenets of higher education; at UHM, those tenets include careful listening, sensitivity to and tolerance for cultural/social differences, analytic, higher-level thinking, educated discourse, considered reactions and responses, researching information/facts/issues/options, and making thoughtful, informed, evidence-based decisions.

II. Advising Structure at UHM

At the University of Hawaii, academic advising occurs on several levels. Therefore, advisors need to be connected to the different levels, and be able to connect students to appropriate resources.

**System Advising.** The *UH System Student Transfer and Intercampus Articulation* agreement establishes an Academic Advising and Transfer Network “to promote the dissemination of information among UH campuses pertaining to student transfer” (E5.209, revised 1/06, Section V. C.).

“It is the responsibility of each campus to be current with articulation and transfer policies of programs, colleges, and campuses across the system and to have practices in place to fully inform students about what they need to navigate smoothly through the system” (Section V. D. 1.).

**College/School Advising.** The fourteen colleges and schools at UHM use a variety of advising models, chosen to suit their particular needs. Most employ a combination of college-level professional advisors (either faculty or APT) and departmental faculty advisors.

**Departmental Advising.** Departments structure their advising in a variety of ways, from a single advisor, to advising by all faculty, to a single advisor who coordinates the department’s faculty. Welcoming new faculty or assigning a new advisor provides an opportune time to review the department’s advising structure and to make adjustments in order to advise students better and more efficiently.

**Advising Resources.** The National Association for Academic Advising (NACADA) promotes and supports quality academic advising in institutions of higher education to enhance the educational development of students. NACADA maintains on-line resources for both professional as well as instructional faculty who perform academic advising functions. NACADA website:  [www.nacada.ksu.edu](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu)
III. Training

Adequate training on both college and departmental levels is essential. Faculty hired as advisors or newly assigned to departmental advising should contact both their college advising office (usually labeled “Student Services” or “Student Academic Services”) and their department office for training materials.

Advisors handle students’ most confidential records, both academic and personal, and must exercise the highest professional ethics. The first step is becoming intimately familiar with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), available at www.hawaii.edu/myuh/manoa/pdfs/Spring_07_FERPA_notice.pdf

Advisors should apply for access to STAR, the reporting system that provides access to a student’s academic history. Access to STAR Correspondent functions (retention & graduation information, etc.) is recommended for those advisors who oversee retention & graduation functions for their departments. Applications are available from https://www.star.hawaii.edu:10011/admininterface_beta/PDFs/STARUserPolicyandSecurityAgreement2005.pdf.

College-level advisors are UHM’s experts in college policies and procedures, campus resources, and the field of academic advising, and can prove to be invaluable resources for departmental advisors. Departmental advisors are UHM’s experts for that major and career field, and college advisors rely on their expertise when providing services, answering questions, and enforcing policies and procedures. College and departmental advisors confer often and refer students to one another regularly. New advisors are encouraged to meet the advisors with whom they will be working.

The most valuable resources for both college and departmental advisors, however, are the more experienced advisors on campus. New advisors are encouraged to make a concerted effort to find an advising mentor, either in the same department or in a similar position elsewhere.

IV. Policies and Procedures

Knowledge of federal, state, and judicial rules and laws governing education is essential for advisors, as these laws often shape the numerous policies and procedures established by the University. In addition to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) listed above, laws providing for equity, honesty, and fairness in education include

- Constitutional Rights (e.g. Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Assembly, etc…)
- Civil Rights Act (1866, 1964)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989
Policies and Procedures provide the framework for the orderly conduct of university programs and uphold the educational standards of the University. To guide and counsel students effectively, advisors should familiarize themselves with institutional policies and procedures.

**Registration and Enrollment Policies** on registration procedures; prerequisites/co-requisites; determining how a course satisfies requirements; late registration; maximum registration; enrollment status; change of college or major; changes in registration such as adding and dropping, withdrawing, or complete withdrawals; leave of absences; etc.

**Credits and Grades:** AP and International BA credits, credit hours, time conflict, credit overload, course overrides, grades, limit on cr/nc option, grade points and calculation of grade point averages, minimum grades required, must be taken for letter grade policy, limit repeat policies, graduate credit for seniors, backtracking, excess credit policies, grads, double dipping policies, etc.

**Examinations:** language placement exams, math placement backcredit policies, advanced placement exams, credit by exam, CLEP.

**Graduation requirements and policies:** college/school program requirements, gened website, concurrent degrees, second bachelor’s degree, applying for graduation, exceptions to degree requirements.

**Academic Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal Policies:** probation, suspension, dismissal, reapplication procedures.

**Articulation and Transfer Credit Policies:** link to OVCAA articulation website, A&R transfer credit database, instructions on submitting equivalencies/substitution for courses

**Student Responsibility** student conduct code, academic dishonesty, etc.

**Grievance procedures:** academic, sexual harassment, etc

Policies and procedures may differ among programs, departments, and colleges across the system. Advisors need to be aware of those differences and become intimately familiar with the policies and procedures of their own department and college.

**V. Services and Support Programs**

There are many services and support programs available on and off campus. Advisors can often provide valuable connections or alternatives for students.

Some of the most common on-campus resources include:
Campus Security 956-6911

Articulation website manoa.hawaii.edu/ovcaa/academics/articulation
Catalog online www.catalog.hawaii.edu

Admissions 956-8975
Advising (for undeclared and “pre” majors) 956-7273
Career Development and Student Employment 956-7007
Cashier’s Office 956-7554
Children’s Center (UHMCC, for childcare) 956-7963
Civil Rights Counselor 956-4431
Co-curricular Activities, Programs, and Services 956-8178
Counseling and Student Development Counseling 956-7927
Dean of Students (Vice-Chancellor for Students) 956-3290
Financial Aid 956-7251
Freshmen Programs (ACE, Freshman Seminars) 956-8626
Gender Equity/Civil Rights Counselors 956-9977
General Education Office 956-6660
Graduate Division 956-8544
Health Center (University Health Center) 956-8965
Honors 956-8391
Housing 956-8177
International Student Services 956-8613
Kokua (for students who need disability access) 956-9250
Kua’ana Student Services (for Native Hawaiian students) 956-2644
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Student Services 956-7511
Manoa Advising Center 956-7273
Multicultural Student Services 956-7348
National Student Exchange 956-6772
New Student Programs 956-3667
Ombuds Office 956-3391
Outreach College 956-7221
Parking 956-8899
Pre-Health and –Law Advising Center 956-4045
Records 956-8010
ROTC Advising 956-0756
Service Learning 956-4641
Student Athlete Academic Services 956-6580
Student Equity, Excellence, and Diversity (for scholarships) 956-4642
Student Success Center (for tutoring) 956-3456
Student Support Services (for first generation students) 956-8402
Study Abroad 956-5143
University Health Center 956-8965
Veterans Affairs 956-7737
Women’s Center 956-8059
Writing Workshop 956-7619
Some of the most common off-campus resources include:

Suicide/Crisis Center (24 hours) 832-3100
Sex Abuse Center (24 hours) 524-7273
Help Line (24 hours) 275-2000 (or 211)
Diamond Head Free STD/HIV Clinic 733-9280
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) 946-1438
Domestic Violence Legal Hotline 531-3771

Additionally, the following are resource connections and professional association for advisors:

UHM Council of Academic Advisors
National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) www.nafsa.org
NAFSA International Educators www.nacada.ksu.edu
NASPA Student Affairs Administrators www.naspa.org

VI. Outcomes and Assessment

As with all teaching, advising includes a curriculum, a pedagogy, and student learning outcomes. Every college and department has or should develop its own set of student learning outcomes for advising, its advising goals, a method of assessment, and a feedback loop to make improvements. The National Academic Advising Association’s “Concept for Advising” provides a helpful starting point at http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Concept-Advising.htm

Advisors can also refer to the Council of Advancement of Standards in Higher Education for academic advising.

VII. Recognition and Rewards

Advisors play a significant role in student satisfaction, engagement, retention, and recruitment. Advising roles, however, vary from department to department and college to college. Therefore, advisors should be aware of their role and the value of that role within their unit.

New advisors may need clarification on how advising fits into promotion and/or tenure. For college advisors, advising is usually a major part of their professional activities and functions. For departmental advisors, advising may be considered either teaching or service, depending on the department.

How exceptional advising is recognized or rewarded at the department, college, or campus level varies. All advisors are encouraged to improve systems of recognition and reward, and to initiate them if they do not yet exist.