

## Focus Group Protocol

Date:

Facilitator:

Location:

### Introduction

Welcome and thank you for attending this informal discussion. Tonight, we are interested in listening to your opinions, comments, and experiences with advisement in the Advisement Services Center/Undergraduate Studies (ASC/US). We would like to hear your opinions and suggestions on a series of questions that our staff developed. The purpose of the discussion is multifaceted. First, we wanted to get out of our offices and into the residence halls to interact with you in an informal setting. Secondly, we would like to improve the quality of the services we provide in ASC/US, and we feel that you have the best suggestions in that area. Finally, we would like to use some of the information to develop a short survey that we can distribute to a larger pool of students, in the hope of getting some feedback on how we in ASC/US are doing and what we can do to improve.

There are three general areas that we are interested in including, expectations before you met your advisor, experiences with your advisor, and what things you would like to see done differently in ASC/US. Our staff has developed a series of questions to get at those answers, but if there is anything you would like to discuss throughout the meeting, please feel free to raise any issue. My role is one of facilitator, so I will be asking rather than answering questions. I can answer some questions that you may have, but I really want to hear your opinions and want you to honestly share your experiences, both good and not so good. Are we ready to begin?

### *Questions and Suggested Follow-up Probes*

#### **Role of an academic advisor**

What are the characteristics of an excellent academic advisor?

Before you came to orientation and met your advisor, what did you think he/she would do?

What did you expect the first meeting to be like?

What questions did you have about UAlbany?

What kinds of information did you think your advisor would have/provide?

Did you expect them to be similar or different from your guidance counselor in high school?

**Let's talk about your experiences with your advisor up to this point.**

Up to this point, have your experiences with your academic advisor been positive or negative?

Describe your one-on-one meeting with your advisor in orientation?

What issues did you want to address?

What issues did the advisor raise with you? (major, course selection, study habits, personal interests, extracurricular involvement, partying, etc.)

Was he/she helpful, in general?

What specifically stands out in your mind about the conversations as most important?

After your initial summer orientation, have you seen your advisor? How many times and for what reasons? *(each response to the following questions should include an example from participants clarifying their answer).*

Was he/she particularly helpful to you?

Do you consider your advisor knowledgeable about academic requirements?

Is your advisor personable?

Does your advisor care about you as a person, beyond academics?

Would you recommend your advisor to a friend?

**What other services or qualities do you think your advisor should offer/have?**

Should academic advisement be mandatory for all students? Freshmen only?

*(Discussion Stimulus Handout)*  
**Academic Advisement: “How we doing?” Focus Groups**

Age:

Gender:

Intended Major:

Before you came to orientation and met your advisor, what did you think he/she would do?

What are the characteristics of an excellent advisor?

How many times have you seen your advisor since orientation? For what reasons?

Would you recommend your advisor to a friend? Why?

What services or qualities do you think your advisor should have/offer?