

Personal Statement of Academic Advising Philosophy

In four years as a professional academic advisor, I have had many opportunities to acquire knowledge and reflect on interactions and experiences that have shaped my personal philosophy of academic advising. In my daily practices, I strive to be intentional about building rapport with my students, while also aligning my practice and conduct with the mission of the University of Oklahoma and NACADA's four pillars of academic advising.

First and foremost, it is crucial that my students understand that they matter to me and the university. This requires the capability to be intentional and genuine in my interactions with them. To achieve this end, I believe it is important to understand and integrate models of academic advising, but my primary approach is embedded in the principles of the Developmental Advising Model. More specifically, I align myself with the work of Kramer (as cited in King, 2005), which suggests that to advise students developmentally requires the following:

1. Possession of knowledge and application of student development theories
2. Focus on the students and their needs over an extended time period and allowing advising session to building upon each other
3. Challenge student to expand and achieve their learning potential, and take curricular and co-curricular risks
4. Hold the perspective that students are active partners engaged in intellectual and personal growth
5. Assist students with exploring and expressing their academic and personal values
6. Guide students with setting short- and long-term goals, develop their methods for achieving their goals, and help students monitor and measure their progress in accomplishing their goals.

This model appeals to me because of its allowance to go beyond the individual's identity or role as a student. It permits me to interact with them as human beings while respecting their thought, values, abilities, goals, and emotions. By primarily utilizing this approach to academic advising, I hope to leave a resounding impact on their lives that surpasses the general "academic" aspects of this portion of their journey.

I hold firm the belief that academic advisors are educators and are critical to the role of higher education. Within our role as educators is the responsibility to not make decisions for students. Rather our responsibility is to construct scaffolding opportunities that empower students (Patton, Renn, Guido & Quaye, 2016). Empowering students can come in different shapes, sizes, words, phrases, activities, and images- what works for one student may not work for another. For this reason, it is my duty and obligation as an academic advisor to realize and respect the diversity of my students. It is the student and their needs during specific interactions that determines how I relate to them, the words I choose, the topics we discuss, and ultimately the outcomes of the interaction. Additionally, this is the very reason that I believe it is important to have knowledge of student development and learning theories. Equally important to me is that students realize and trust that when they interact with me that they are encountering an agent of the University of Oklahoma that supports their aspirations, cares about them as an individual, cheers for their success, helps them to make sense of their setbacks, and displays respect to them as a member of the university community.

As I mentioned, aligning my practice of academic advising with the institution's mission is something that I strive to do daily. The University of Oklahoma's mission statement begins, "The mission of the University of Oklahoma is to provide the best possible educational experience for our students..." (The University of Oklahoma, 2016, p. 13). It is imperative to acknowledge that education in the collegiate environment is not limited to the classroom. Students partake in numerous extra- and co-curricular experiences that provide opportunities for learning and growth that cannot be acquired from books or lectures. It is my practice and belief that academic advisors should not only support student engagement in these opportunities, but also be privy to the opportunities and resources that are available to make the appropriate recommendations and referrals.

Finally, as I practice the profession of academic advising, guide students through their curriculum, help them make sense of their experiences, and become a small part of their journey through this university, I have also made a commitment to expanding my knowledge and improving my skills through attending and being a presenter at both Oklahoma Academic Advising Association and National Academic Advising Association conferences, while also being involved in enhancing the profession of academic advising at the University of Oklahoma. My reasons for being involved in these arenas are simple: 1) I want to be the best possible advisor that I can be for my students, and 2) I believe that the profession of academic advising is central to the mission and success of higher education, and my hope is that my professional peers at OU will realize that positionality and flourish in their own respect as professional academic advisor.

References:

King, M. C. (2005). Developmental academic advising. Retrieved from *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* Website: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Developmental-Academic-Advisings.aspx>

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