**Introduction to Academic Advising at the University of Missouri**

**Module 2: Impact of Academic Advising**

1. **Introduction**
2. **Module Objectives/Guiding Questions**

UM System Academic Advising Competencies

Module 2 addresses advising stakeholders and the impact of academic advising. This module relates to the Counselor/Mentor and Collaborator roles. If you click the hotspots to the right, you will also see the specific behavioral anchors targeted in this module.

Guiding Questions

Welcome to Module 2: Impact of Academic Advising

You should be able to answer **these** questions by the end of this module.

Questions 1 – Who are the stakeholders in academic advising?

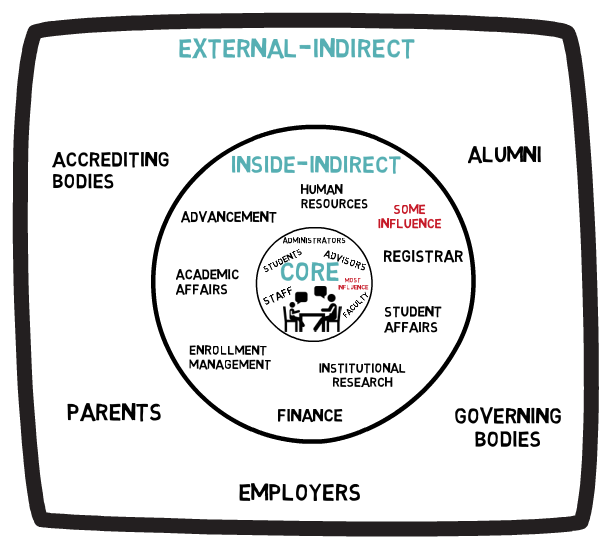
Question 2 – How does academic advising fit into your institution’s mission, vision and values?

Question 3 – What are the potential outcomes of academic advising?

Keep these in mind as you complete this module.

1. **Stakeholders**
   1. Diagram

First, we are going to talk about individuals and groups that are involved with academic advising. At the center, of course, is the student/advisor relationship; but there are other people and groups that have an interest in academic advising. Watch this video to learn more:



**[Video]**

In addition to building strong relationships with students, advisors must also understand the larger context of their work in order to ensure student success. One way to do this is by analyzing the advising program’s stakeholders.

Stakeholders are people or groups that have an interest or concern, be it personal, professional, civic, or financial in the outcomes of academic advising.

Two things to consider are whether stakeholders come from within your institution or not

AND whether they have direct or indirect involvement with advising.

* At the **Core** are those groups and individuals that are directly involved with the delivery, planning and policy setting related to advising. Core stakeholders have the MOST influence and include students, faculty, advisors, staff, and administrators.
* **Inside-Indirect** stakeholders are those groups and individuals that have SOME influence over the delivery, planning and policy setting for academic advising. These include institutional offices such as the registrar, student affairs, academic affairs, and institutional research.
* **External-Indirect** stakeholders influence the institution but don’t have direct involvement with advising. This group includes parents, alumni, employers, accrediting bodies, and state and regional governing boards.

These are the people and groups that have an interest in the success of academic advising. The more people that feel a sense of “ownership” over a program, the more invested they will be to help you meet your program goals. In addition, the students that you advise today become the employees and alumni of tomorrow. Your work helps to build loyalty to the institution and can influence future financial support as well as word of mouth endorsement of your program and university.

Over the next several slides, we will look at some of these stakeholders in a little more detail.

Inside-Indirect

It is important to understand how different offices within your university work together to achieve the overall institutional mission. For example, as an academic advisor you will interact with the Registrar’s office regularly. You may need to clarify a degree requirement or ask for exemptions for students in unusual circumstances. Understanding that part of the Registrar’s job is to protect the integrity of degrees offered by your institution will help you appreciate their position when you ask for assistance. Developing strong relationships with other offices will benefit your students. For example, building connections with Student Affairs staff can help you connect students to co-curricular learning opportunities and support programs that can greatly enrich their on-campus experiences. Look for opportunities to get to know staff from other offices.

Accrediting Bodies & Governing Boards

Although you may not have much direct contact with accrediting bodies or governing boards, as an academic advisor, your performance SHOULD support the university’s mission and strategic plan and therefore impacts the overall institutions’ performance. For example, if your university has established a goal to increase first-year retention rates for a particular group of students, you should be examining Your program’s outcomes and considering what part advising can play in making improvements.

Parents

While advisors have less interaction with parents than with on-campus stakeholders, parents may contact an advisor for a variety of reasons. For example, they may want to learn about career and research opportunities OR they may call if a student is experiencing academic or personal difficulty. It can be a challenge to balance student privacy rights with building trusting relationships with parents. We will talk in more detail about this in Module 4.

<https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Parent-resource-links.aspx>

* 1. Employers

Some of you may have direct contact with employers, but even if you do not, employers are developing impressions of your university based on the performance of your students. The work that you do as an advisor helps students build problem-solving skills and connect what they are learning in class to their own personal and career goals. Employers have an interest in prepared job candidates and therefore benefit from your work. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) surveys employers to examine trends and identify preferred learning experiences. Recent surveys have shown that most employers emphasize the importance of global skills that cut across majors. Skills such as the ability to communicate orally and to work effectively on teams. Employers also say they are more likely to hire students with high-impact, applied learning experiences. Explore the AACU link and handouts for more information about employer’s perspectives.

<https://www.aacu.org/leap/public-opinion-research>

<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/6_globallearningoutcomes.pdf>

<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/3HIPS_executives.pdf>

* 1. Students

The most important stakeholders are the students you advise. Although students are sometimes characterized as consumers of higher education, Yarborough asserts that rather than buying goods or services, students are paying for a relationship – that of mentorship and teaching. From this perspective, rather than simply providing a service, part of your job is building a mutually supportive learning environment by helping students to identify and address their assumptions; helping them to clarify their academic goals; and supporting them to achieve their goals by guiding them through the curriculum. It is important to reflect upon how YOU characterize the nature of the advising relationship.

Next, we will talk about student preferences when it comes to academic advising.

Student Preferences

Of course, each student will have their own opinion, but we know from research that most students prefer certain things when it comes to academic advising. We will address relational skills in future units, but here are a few tips to get you started. Consider how you might incorporate some of these things into your practices:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do** | **Don’t** |
| Good communication  Accessible  Flexible  Provide info about jobs & internships  Some face-to-face | Unorganized  Have out-of-date information  Too busy  Unwelcoming  Unresponsive |

First, students appreciate organized academic advisors who clearly communicate expectations and really listen to their concerns. In general, they do not mind electronic and phone communications, but do like to have at least some opportunities for face-to-face conversations. Students like to be able to reach an advisor when they need something. It can be off-putting or even unwelcoming if you seem too busy, so pay attention to your body language. It is important to have current information. Students particularly like receiving information about jobs and internships; however, this information is shared in a variety of ways, so it is a good idea to make sure you understand how it is handled by your specific program and institution.

Again, these are generalizations. Get to know your students. What do they prefer?

A download containing all activities can be found in the resources section at the end of the module. Activities are highly recommended as they help you to apply what you are learning. If you are a staff advisor, check in with your supervisor about their expectations regarding module activities.

**D. Activities**

1. Create your own stakeholder diagram based on the organizational structure of your advising program.

Do you need to add anyone?

Do you need to move levels?

Proximity is one way of understanding stakeholders, but it is also helpful to consider each groups’ level of interest and level of influence. You can do this simply by putting high, medium or low next to each stakeholder. It doesn’t have to be complicated. If you are not sure, talk to your supervisor about your program’s stakeholders.

1. Research the internal-indirect stakeholders at your institution. What does each office do? How might you interact with this office as an advisor? Review with your supervisor to make sure you understand and ask for any tips on when and who to contact in different situations.

* Academic Affairs
* Enrollment Management
* Finance
* Human Resources
* Institutional Advancement
* Institutional Research
* Registrar
* Student Affairs

1. **Mission**
2. **Mission & Academic Advising**

Larger Societal & Political Context

In addition to contributing through research, public institutions, like ours, serve by teaching students the knowledge and skills they need to become contributing members of their communities. This is done within a larger societal and political context. Some example of issues facing higher education include concern over rising costs, calls to address barriers to access, demands to raise admissions standards, and concerns over grade inflation. Other concerns include the ethics of college athletics, student involved sexual assaults, and experiences of exclusion and discrimination. White (2015) argues that academic advisors can and should play a key role in addressing these issues because they are in the unique position of reaching ALL students. In the next section, we will talk about the relationship between academic advising and the larger institutional mission.

Please watch this short video to learn more about the relationship of academic advising to the institutional mission.

[video]

CAS Academic Advising Standards recommend establishing missions, values, and goal statements related to academic advising at the institution or unit level. This provides the opportunity to align the work of academic advising with the larger institutional mission, values, and goals.

Academic advising serves as a bridge between student and institutional goals. Advisors support the institutional mission by helping students achieve their goals.

Although academic advisors support students in a VARIETY of ways that contribute to their overall adjustment to the university, some argue that the emphasis should really be on the ACADEMIC part of academic advising.

This perspective advocates for advisors to approach the curriculum in a holistic manner, exploring how the various pieces can fit together in ways that support both the goals of the institution AND the goals of the student.

Authors Hemwall and Trachte especially emphasize the importance of academic advisors teaching students about the mission of the institution. This mission should guide an advisor’s work, but can also help students make sense of their educational experience. One way to do this, is by encouraging students to consider the PERSONAL meaning they assign to concepts within the mission and how the concepts tie to their own goals.

Because they interact with almost every student and also act as a hub to other campus resources, advisors are in a unique position to help students through their learning process.

In order to understand the curriculum and to be in a position to advocate for the students’ perspective, advisors must be in close contact and engaged with the people and processes who make curricular decisions.

So, while it is very important to connect with students, remember that in order to best serve them, you must also build relationships that help you to understand the goals and rationale underlying the curriculum.

Characteristics of Quality Advising Programs

We have established that academic advisors can and do play a key role in achieving their institution’s mission. In order to do this, advising programs must strive to continually improve. Although you may not have authority over all of these areas as a frontline advisor, you do have influence over many of the Characteristics of Quality Advising Programs outlined by Hunter and White (2004). As you will see, these authors recommend that advising mission statements be tied to CAS Academic Advising Standards and Values. You learned about these program standards in Module 1. In advising, there is a tension between advocating for the student and adhering to school policies, so these standards help to guide your behavior. Providing ongoing trainings like the one you are completing right now are also one of the qualities.

Please review the characteristics of quality advising programs by clicking through the gallery to the right:

1. Institutional academic advising mission statements clearly outline the function of advising.
2. Standards and values should be based on CAS Standards.
3. There is not one best structure. Advising program structure should match the characteristics of the student population.
4. Ongoing advisor training should include theory, student demographics, policies and procedures, legal and ethical issues, referral strategies, and student expectations.
5. When possible, strong programs use quality electronic processes to free up time for relationship building.
6. Campus-wide councils provide oversight to advising and make recommendations and review policies.
7. Do regular program evaluation to demonstrate how advising influences students’ overall education experience.
8. Assessments of advisors should be tied directly to the goals of the advising program, occur on a regular basis, and include self-reflection.
9. Strong advising programs provide rewards and recognition for excellent advising.

**B. Activities**

1. Take a few minutes and read the UM System Mission and Strategic Priorities as well as the mission statement for your institution.

**Institutional Mission Statements**

UM system:

<https://www.umsystem.edu/about-us>

<https://www.umsystem.edu/president/president_priorities>

MU:

<https://missouri.edu/about/mission.php>

<https://chancellor.missouri.edu/planning/strategic-plan/>

UMKC:

<https://www.umkc.edu/chancellor/mission-vision.cfm>

<https://umkc.edu/about/strategic-plan.html>

Missouri S&T:

<https://chancellor.mst.edu/mission/>

<https://provost.mst.edu/new-strategic-plan/>

UMSL:

<http://www.umsl.edu/proud/about/mission.html>

<http://www.umsl.edu/services/academic/strategic-plan/>

2)

* + Write a paragraph about how the academic advising mission statement supports the overall institutional mission.
  + If your unit does not have an academic advising mission statement, write your own. Keep it to about a paragraph and make sure it points clearly back to the overall institutional mission.
  + Share your work with your supervisor for feedback.

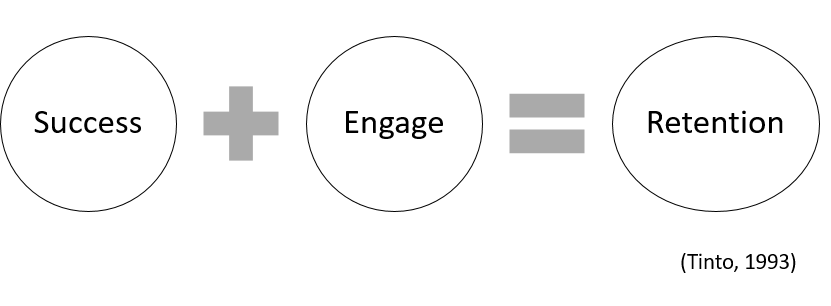
1. **Student Outcomes**

Student Success

Student success is important to all higher education stakeholders. In terms of student success, retention and graduation rates are the primary metrics used by institutions to show they are meeting their mission. And most institutional leaders recognize that academic advisors play an important role in helping students to succeed.

Tinto

Instead of seeing retention of students as the goal, Tinto (1993) describes retention as a result of a successful and engaging college experience. Students come with varying experiences, skills, knowledge, and resources, but what happens once they get here is AS important as what they bring. Academic advisors can have a strong influence over what happens once a student gets to the university, making advising key to student persistence through graduation.



Engagement

An important way to promote student success is through helping students to become engaged on campus. This means participation in learning opportunities as well as co-curricular activities that help a student to feel a part of the campus community. Engaged students are more satisfied and more persistent. Academic advising is in the position to help create engaging learning experiences for students. The challenge is directing students toward those activities that are the “right” ones for learning and success. Academic advisors play the role of hub, helping students get and stay connected with resources and others in the academic community.

Advising Relationship

Pascarella & Terenzini found that the happiest and most successful students have solid relationships with mentors and advisors. By building strong relationships, advisors can help students develop academic and decision-making skills that allow them to clarify and work toward their goals. Through this relationship, you can see where students get disconnected (whether that be academically or socially) and help them get reconnected.

Students frequently have questions and need guidance at the beginning of their academic career for things like choosing majors and learning the mechanics of getting registered for courses. But in order to keep students engaged, the advising relationship should be ongoing and focused on teaching and learning. In other modules we will look more at the teaching and learning that occurs in the context of the advising relationship including the importance of clearly articulating the advising curriculum.

Promoting Student Success

There are some (DeSousa, 2005) guiding principles for promoting student success. These include thinking of advising as a team sport – play your part but also learn about what others on campus have to offer. This can help you to connect students to co-curricular learning opportunities and other diverse experiences that really help promote student success. Make sure to focus on meaningful interactions with students, set clear expectations, and build on the experiences students bring. Over the next two slides, flip each card to learn more about how you can implement each of these principles.

1. Adopt a **talent development** approach to advising. In other words, meet students where they are academically, socially, psychologically. Build on their previous experiences. Be well informed, have high but attainable expectations, help students cultivate habits of the mind that maximize their undergraduate experience.
2. Think of advising as a **team** sport with faculty, staff, peers, librarians, and administrators all playing a role. Make sure to consider all the expertise you have at your university. You do not have to do and know everything. You just have to know how to connect students. For example, make sure to help students tap into faculty expertise related to their field. Also, connecting students early to learning supports (tutoring, supplemental instruction) is critical to retention.
3. Set **clear expectations**. Help students map out a path to success. Make sure students know what to expect. Make it clear to students what they need to do to succeed. First year programming is one way to help students know what to expect, but there are many other things you can do as an advisor to make sure expectations are clear. Periodically review advising materials and consider having someone look at your materials with fresh eyes to provide feedback.
4. Focus on **meaningful interactions** with students. Frequent and high-quality interactions with students are important for building relationships and helping students feel connected. Create reasons for students, faculty, and advisors to be together. Informal gatherings such as lunch and learns or journal clubs provide opportunity for conversations that might not happen at formal meetings.
5. Connect students to **co-curricular learning** opportunities. Student learning outside of the classroom strongly influences what happens inside. It has been shown that strong performing institutions are purposeful about connecting students to real life issues. Some examples of complimentary experiences include service learning, study abroad, civic engagement, internships, experiential learning.
6. Encourage students to seek out and learn from **diverse experiences** with diverse co-participants. There is evidence that these experiences help build leadership abilities and the ability to communicate better with others. Students participating in these experiences tend to have more interactions with peers and faculty and view the learning environment more positively.

**B. Activities**

1. Become familiar with the materials related to your advising program. Try to read them through the eyes of a student. Are they clear? Do they leave you with any questions? Talk to your supervisor about these materials.
2. Learn about opportunities to build relationships. Talk to others in your department/unit about informal opportunities to get to know students. Identify at least two ways you can help students build relationships with you and others at your university.

Thank you for the work you do to help our students succeed. For additional information, please explore the references and resources available over the next couple of slides.

1. **References/Suggested Readings**

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