

Principles of Effective Advising

Effective advisers are **accessible** to their advisees, **provide accurate information** and maintain a **caring** adviser-student relationship. They help students **select courses** while promoting **independent decision-making**.

Becoming More Accessible

Students will feel more comfortable seeking the help and assistance of their academic adviser if they know that the adviser wants to meet with advisees. Advisers that encourage students to meet with them several times during the quarter will have a greater opportunity to mentor the student and provide assistance when the student is facing difficulty. To increase your availability to meet with advisees, please do the following:

- Reserve office hours for advising.
- **Post your office hours and encourage your advisees to visit you** whenever they need advice as well as when they schedule appointments with you.
- Set aside enough time for each advisee, especially during the registration periods every quarter.
- **Encourage your advisees to seek help early on in the quarter, when they first notice they are struggling in a class or even when they are ready to apply for graduation.** Make sure they have enough time to ask whatever questions may be lingering in their minds.
- Finally, **plan to meet with each advisee at least once outside of pre-registration appointments.** Check up on them during the quarter to monitor their progress and help with any concerns they may have.

Providing Accurate Information

Many students, especially those in their freshman and sophomore years, rely heavily upon their advisers to assist them in planning their course of study. Therefore it is vitally important for advisers to provide accurate information to students. Advisers must be knowledgeable of the following:

- **Know the academic requirements of your department and of the [general studies program](#) thoroughly, as well as the policies, procedures, and programs of the University at large.**
- Be aware of [academic deadlines](#), such as when to add or drop classes, when to turn in a senior outline, etc.
- Understand how to use degree audits and teach students to use them.
- Utilize the [Guide to Academic Advising](#) and encourage students to do so.
- Be familiar with the [Walla Walla University schedule of classes](#) and show students how to access it.
- Know when to recommend petitions, requests for waivers, placement tests, and non-traditional credit.
- Use your knowledge of specific courses, opportunities available to students (scholarships, new courses, interdisciplinary programs, etc.), and student-specific

information (whether gleaned from an advisee or from myWWU) to provide students with an accurate vision of Walla Walla University and their role here.

- Use your broad knowledge of specific advisees to interpret new information regarding them.
- Become as familiar as possible with the resources available on campus. **When students have special needs, refer them to other places on campus, such as the [Career Center](#), the [TLC](#), [Disability Support Services](#), [Counseling and Testing Services](#), [Student Financial Services](#), and [Campus Health and Wellness](#).** If your advisees ask questions to which you do not know the answers, do your best to find out for them.

Maintaining a Caring Adviser-Student Relationship

As an adviser, your leadership and example plays an integral role in fostering student success at Walla Walla University. When interacting with your advisees, always strive to do the following:

- **Radiate a friendly spirit.**
- Do whatever it takes to learn and remember advisees' names.
- Listen to their concerns. Whether their problems involve academics or just the rough transition to college life, they will be comforted to know that someone cares enough to listen.
- Once you are aware of your advisees' difficulties, do what you can to enable them to conquer and overcome. Question them and challenge them to carefully reason through the decisions they make.
- Be efficient and flexible in the advising process—when advisees see that you can move them efficiently through your office while taking enough time to meet their needs, they will be confident in your ability to advise them wisely.

Selecting Courses and Promoting Independent Decision-Making

Before selecting courses, spend time getting to know the student's personality, interests, abilities, and non-academic commitments such as work or volunteering. This will help you and the student select courses that will enrich their educational experience by challenging them without overwhelming them.

Ultimately, students must make academic decisions for themselves and take responsibility for finalizing their plans. Your job as an Adviser is to help them articulate and define their goals, weigh their options, and help them make informed decisions about their academics. **Never make decisions for your advisees.** Some students may be insecure in their decision-making ability and may seek direct answers from you. Listen to them, ask directed questions about their goals, and provide the appropriate resources to help them. **Telling them what to do puts potential blame on you as their adviser if something does not work out as your advisees expect.**

Recognize that each student is at a different stage in their intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development, and that as they progress through their program their

aspirations and intended career paths will change. Continually adjust your approach to meet students where they are, and when necessary help your students resolve dissonance between what they or their parents expected of themselves and what they now feel they are capable of. Always observe for patterns that suggest a student may need help from an outside resource; do not attempt to provide counseling, health or financial advice but rather refer them to the appropriate office.

"I have found the best way to give advice to my children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it."

Harry S. Truman

Advising Limitations

While it may seem as though advisers are expected to be super-human in their ability and availability, there are reasonable and healthy **boundaries** that can and should be set in the adviser-student relationship.

Advisers cannot force students to reduce their academic or employment loads. However, **advisers can encourage students to make appropriate changes or contact the appropriate authorities** when it appears that students are having trouble with their current load.

Academic advisers are not expected to handle emotional problems that fall outside the range of normal student behavior. Complex financial, emotional, physical, or personal problems should be referred to appropriate departments. Academic advisers are not psychological counselors. If they become aware of serious problems, the best thing to do is to refer students to offices and people who have training in the appropriate areas.

Advisers, while expected to have enough office time to accommodate their advisees, should not take on so much advising responsibility that it hinders their ability to help each advisee and fulfill the other responsibilities of their positions. If you have questions or concerns about your advising load, please contact the Academic Advising office so we can try to adjust your load.

