



# ACADEMIC ADVISING POTFOLIO


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### **Introduction**

This portfolio displays my understanding and application of the knowledge I have acquired through Kansas State University's Masters Degree Program in Academic Advising. My philosophy of academic advising will be my guide as I practice academic advising in any setting. I understand that this philosophy is not set in stone and will change through personal and professional experiences and as new research comes to light. It will be edited and added to during my time as an academic advisor.

I have chosen three diverse case studies to respond to. In my responses I will demonstrate my knowledge and competence in:

- Apply advising strategies and practices to institutional advising programs and individual advising.
- Apply theories of learning, student development, and career development to assist students with their academic and career planning.
- Understand the influence of multicultural factors on the advising relationship and the content of advising with students.
- Apply knowledge of the needs and characteristics of specific groups of students and apply to academic advising.

### **Philosophy of Academic Advising Statement**

As an advisor I can, and expect to, play a large role in my advisee's time in higher education. My role is to be welcoming, accessible, ethical, understanding, and supportive while my advisee develops academically, professionally, and personally. I am responsible for communicating effectively and being knowledgeable about my institution, their procedures and policies, development theories, and advising practices to assist my advisees in various aspects of their development. More specifically, I will assist my advisees in exploring, defining, and reaching their academic and career goals and encourage them to explore their personal development as well. Being self-aware, making my students feel like they matter, and assisting them to explore their self-authorship are three key pillars to my advising philosophy.

I will be aware of the diverse student population and how my identity and perspective differ from theirs. "To prevent assumptions from limiting their interactions with students, advisors must remain reflective and self-aware" (Archambault, 2015, p. 189). To do this properly, I will ask myself the Five Questions as a framework before addressing students. The Five Questions are:

1. How does the student's experience differ from my own?
2. Am I making assumptions about this student based upon visible and invisible areas of diversity?
3. How do my assumptions about all students on this campus seem to fit or not fit this student?
4. What student characteristics contribute to academic successes or challenges?
5. What types of support does this student (and this campus) possess to address specific areas of diversity that he or she represents (Archambault, 2015, p. 189-191)?

This framework allows me to practice the NACADA Core Values of inclusivity, integrity, professionalism, and respect (2017). By taking the time to understand my students, I will be able to create efficient advising sessions for them. This includes adjusting my advising approaches, what resources to utilize, and what theories might apply to their development. This will help students feel like they matter.

Nancy Schlossberg's (1989) theory of mattering and marginality states that students who feel like they matter will feel confidence and when they feel like they do not matter students will disengage and withdraw (Roufs, 2015, p. 74). This should greatly affect the advisor to student relationship. I will make every one of my advisees feel important, because they are. To achieve this, I will have to understand what resources on campus also support my advisee and practice the core values of caring and commitment (NACADA, 2017). It is not enough that I believe they matter; the institution should make my advisees feel like they matter as well. I will assess my campus climate and assist in creating a welcoming campus environment. This will help me create a stronger relationship with my students, retain more of my students, and promote engagement between me and my student, and engagement between my student and the institution. This type of support will assist in their development to becoming independent.

Marcia Baxter Magolda's (2010) theory of self-authorship outlines how a student grows to rely on themselves to create a definition of their knowledge and values (Roufs, 2015, p. 75). I will practice the core value of empowerment (NACADA, 2017) and work with my advisees to assist them in becoming self-reliant when it comes to collecting information, creating an opinion or decision, defining their goals, creating plans, and putting it all into action. I will have to ask my advisee complex questions that will reveal what affects their decisions and opinions and

encourage reflection. As they explore this, they will grow to decide that they will rely on themselves more often until they achieve self-authorship.

As my students will be learning about themselves and their surroundings, so will I. I vow to continue learning about academic advising trends and adapt to my changing environment as needed.

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### **Case Study 1: Case of Megan**

Megan is an 18-year-old freshman who attends a small, private college and is completely undecided about what major to choose. She has a job on campus, gets along with her roommate, and states that her classes are going “fine.” Spring semester is coming up and Megan needs help choosing the next classes she will take. Sociology is the class she shows interest in as she has been interested in environmental and concerns for a long time. In addition to sociology, Megan expresses interest in geology because one of her peers who is also interested in the environment is majoring in it. However, Megan’s past low science grades are concerning. When asked about her past science classes, she says that she was interested in earth science. She said that her science notes did not make sense when she read them outside of class and she has trouble understanding charts and diagrams used. After discussing studying strategies for Megan to try, she still seems nervous and troubled.

Megan then opens up and says that she is gay and has come out to most of her close circle of support except for her parents. Semester break is coming up and she feels like that is the best time to tell her parents and asks for advice on how to go about it. The advisor asks about Megan’s relationship with her parents, how she told her sister, and what her sister’s reaction was.

### **Response to Case Study 1: Case of Megan**

Megan is developing her identity in many ways. She is becoming a decided student and developing morals. In addition, she is asking her advisor for help with her LGBT identity development.

### **Considerations**

While Megan is thinking about her decision to tell her parents about her identity, she is also working on her moral development. Using Gilligan’s Theory of Women’s Moral



Development as reference, she is experiencing the *Second Transition: From Goodness to Truth*. In this stage, “individuals view examination of their own needs as truth” (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016, p. 348). Although she cares about her parent’s response, she is wanting to find a way to prioritize her truth so that she can tell them soon.

Megan has not told her parents about her sexual identity because she is nervous about what her parent’s reactions might be like. Developing a non-heterosexual identity is a “fluid and complex process influenced by other psychosocial identities” (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005, p. 28). Of the six identity processes outlined in D’Augelli’s (1994) Life Span Model of Sexual Identity, Megan is only expressing her focus on the identity process of *becoming an LGB offspring*. Because the six identity processes are independent of each other (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005, p. 29), there is no need to ask Maria about those processes to assist her properly.

### **Advising Strategies**

The advisor should practice strength-based advising to guide Megan through her moral development. This will help Megan envision and explore her potential (Drake, 2015, p. 237). Her strengths that she expressed in this session are being able to focus on her interests and morals to guide her in choosing her classes and being able to share her identity with her sister and friends out of choice. Megan’s advisor has begun the strength-based advising by asking Megan about how the process went when she told her sister about her sexual identity. Focusing on these strengths will help Megan build confidence her in her decision to tell her parents.

After the advisor discusses and aids in Megan’s decision-making process, Megan should be referred to the LGBT resource center. In this case, a referral is effective because the advisor does not know everything about the subject, and that the trust can lead to advisor dependence (Jordan, 2015, pp. 219-220). The LGBT resource center is a safe space for Megan to talk about

subject she is still nervous about and receive more specific advice about how to best handle family issues. However, if this is not available, then the advisor can assist by having Megan assess the pros and cons of coming out to her parents, create a “game plan,” and explore ways to structure conversations with her parents. Switching roles and having the advisor role play as Megan and Megan role play as her parents may be beneficial as well (Lindenburg, 2012).

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### **Case Study 2: Case of Maria**

Maria is a Latina, first-generation student who is attending her second year at a large predominately white suburban state university. She is a 19-year-old who is “normal” in intelligence, dislikes school, but has an interest in math and science. During her last advising session, she admitted that she turns in her assignments late if at all. Her involvement with her university outside of the classroom is limited and works 20 hours a week at a fast food restaurant. Her group of friends also have little involvement in university related activities and do not take their education seriously. A few of her friends were caught doing drug-related activities.

Her advisor has met Maria’s parents before during New Student Orientation. They believe that Maria’s education will lead to a good paying job so that she could help provide for her family. Maria agreed at the time. Now, she is often unenthusiastic in her advising sessions and meets right before it is time to enroll for classes. This makes it seem like she only meets with him to lift the flag off her profile so she can choose classes. During her upcoming advising session, choosing a major will be discussed as asked by Maria’s father.

### **Response to Case Study 2: Case of Maria**

Maria meets with her advisor because she needs to, not because she wants to. This could be for many different reasons and it is up to the advisor to break down those barriers.

#### **Concerns**

As a first-generation university student, Maria faces barriers she may have not expected such as academic, social, and cultural (Cardoza, 2016). There are many resources on campus that Maria may not know about or how to utilize. Regardless, many first-generation students seek to create a trusting relationship with their advisors. To do this, her advisor should be genuinely

interested in her background and family and explore how to move forward from there (Sickles, 2004). Doing this shows that the advisor is not focused on characteristics Maria has, and that is essential to know what they mean to Maria (Cunningham, 2016). This process involves asking many open-ended questions. It should be avoided that the conversation seems like an investigation and that there a consistent tone of caring throughout the session.

Maria has shown that she respects her family and agrees with them that a college education was important. In addition, it seems like her family wants to be involved in her education as her father directly spoke to her advisor about choosing a major. However, this is not reflected in her engagement with her schoolwork. Her current support system of friends do not value school. “If academic achievement is not a value connected to a certain group, it is less likely a student from that group will value it” (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016, p. 141). Although the advisor can not choose their student’s friend for them, the advisor can refer the students to network with others and experience other student groups and campus resources in addition to the friends they already have.

Although, this is not explicitly mentioned by Maria, it is important to keep Maria’s Latino ethnic identity in mind. Cerezo and Chang (2013) found that, “ethnic pride and support from ethnically similar peer crucial to Latino academic success” (Patton et al., 2016, p. 142).” Depending on whether this is something Maria is interested in can help her academic and social development.

### **Advising Techniques**

The advisor should keep two guiding principles in mind:

1. Cultural identity is made of a myriad of aspects

2. Care must be taken to avoid applying stereotypes or over-simplification of these ideas (Cunningham, 2016).

Therefore, building a caring and trusting relationship with Maria is essential.

In addition, the advisor should understand intersectionality as well. Intersectionality highlights that no person has only one identity category; all people exist at the intersection of multiple identities” (Cunningham, 2016). Maria has an array of factors that could be affecting her development.

Maria’s advisor is planning for the meeting ahead of time, they is being proactive which means they are practicing intrusive advising. Torres, Reiser, LePeau, Davis, and Ruder (2006) found in a study of first-generation Latino students that relationship building achieved through gaining students’ trust (Ohrt, 2016). To fully practice intrusive advising, the advisor should be available and accessible to Maria and follow up with her frequently.

Alexander Astin’s (1984) Involvement theory displays that “engaging actively in the environment is a prerequisite for student learning and growth”. Advisors play a large role in creating these opportunities for students to have essential developmental experience inside and outside of the classroom (Patton et al., 2016, pp. 34-35). Maria’s advisor should research resources that may benefit Maria. This includes Student Support Services, tutoring, first-year college student groups, and multicultural offices and student groups. The more Maria is involved in the university’s community, the greater impact it will have on her development. To incorporate this theory into practice, prescriptive advising should be utilized. First-generation, at-risk, and exploratory students like Maria often respond to the prescriptive advising (Drake, 2015 p. 232)

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### **Case Study 3: Case of Mark**

Mark is a 19-year-old, white student who came in to withdraw from his classes. When asked why he wants to withdraw, he says that it is his second year at the university and that he doesn't belong here. He skips his classes regularly and is behind in all his courses, even when he enjoyed his Chemistry lab. His older brother attended and graduated from this university which is why his parents wanted him to attend this college. They want him to attend law school as well like his older brother is. However, Mark has interest in becoming an auto mechanic as he spends much of his time working on his bike.

### **Response to Case Study 3: Case of Mark**

Although Mark does not ask many questions and seems to be decided, there is more to unpack here than meets the eye. Mark seems to be hitting a milestone in his self-authorship development and is asking for assistance in his career development.

### **Considerations**

Mark is where he is now because he followed what his parents wanted for him. He is now coming to his advisor wanting to change that completely. Using Baxter Magolda's (2001) Path to Self-Authorship, Mark is experiencing *Phase 2: Crossroads*. In this phase, individuals realize that the pathway they are not does not suit them and feel the to create a new path that they can be fully engaged in (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye., 2016, p. 367). The advisor's duty is to guide Mark through *Phase 2* and connect him to *Phase 3: Becoming the Author of One's Life*.

The discussion between mark and his advisor focusses on classes and academics. However, there needs to be a discussion about career advising as well. This might be a new concept to Mark as he came in expecting a 10-minute session consisting of him dropping his classes and leaving. However, career advising is not that simple. Career advising consists of



building and assessing knowledge of the individual's self, educational opportunities, and facts about the work world to create realistic academic and occupational options (Gordon, 2006, p. 16). The purpose of career advising is "to help students make academic decisions that incorporate knowledge of academic/career relationships and possibilities" (Gordon, 2006, p.13).

### **Advising Techniques**

To assist Mark in his self-authorship development, motivational interviewing should be utilized. The advisor has already begun this process by asking "What have you wanted to do as a career?" and "Have you had some experience working on cars, or on your motorcycle?" They are using open ended questions that encourage options for change (Drake, 2015, p. 239). This trend should be continued to gain more information about Mark and to have him begin thinking about his goals and plans for his future. The utilization of questions that push self-authorship should be seen as well to create a more impactful advising session. These are questions that encourage reflective conversation that challenge and support Mark (Drake, 2015, p. 242). Mark will be encouraged to reflect on his situation, interests, priorities, and more to create a stronger commitment to what he chooses to pursue.

In addition, the advisor should teach Mark about the 3-I Process for career development. It is important that this process is taught because "career development is a lifelong, complex process that is influenced by a variety of factors" (Hughey & Hughey, 2009, p.4). Mark will utilize this process again if taught properly.

The first phase is *Inquire* is where they will discuss Mark's academic and career concerns, his needs, and solidify any information needed to move into the next phase. Listening, interpreting, and answering questions effectively are to be prioritized in this phase (Gordon,

2006, p. 47). The next phase is a research phase called *Inform*. This is where students need to gather information on

1. Their personal attributes and interests
2. Educational information and skill set information
3. Occupational information (Gordon, 2006, p. 63)

The advisor will assist Mark in this phase, at the very least they will point him to reliable resources. It will be up to Mark to interpret how this information affects his decision-making process. The final phase is *Integrate*. Mark will decide “what additional assistance is needed to help students organize and make meaningful connections between the information sources they have collected” (Gordon, 2006, p. 79). Once Mark is able to make connections between the first two phases, he will be able to use that information in his decision-making process. The decision-making process is the meat of the *Integrate* phase. The intended outcome of the 3-I Process is for Mark to decide if he is prepared and committed to the career exploration journey he is making for himself.

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