Coastal Carolina University Philosophy of Academic Advising

At Coastal Carolina University, academic advising is viewed as a vital part of the educational process because advising helps students develop meaningful educational plans that are compatible with their personal and career goals. Faculty advisors and students become engaged in a continuing process of communication that can influence students’ growth and success; students learn to accept responsibility for their education though their advisor’s guidance in curricular and professional choices. When advising is done well, it facilitates student development. It is the philosophy of Coastal Carolina University that effective academic advising enhances students’ collegiate experiences and persistence at the University.

The Role of the Academic Advisor at Coastal Carolina University

Academic advising is a joint responsibility between the advisor and the student. Effective academic advisors create an atmosphere of openness, caring, and concern where meaningful communication and trust exist. They listen constructively, attempting to hear all aspects of the student’s concerns while assisting the student in clarifying values and goals.

Advisors provide proactive assistance to academically underprepared students, but assist all students in identifying career interests and setting career goals. They help students in academic difficulty recognize possible causes of their difficulties and suggest alternative courses of action. Academic advisors also encourage first-year students to become involved in campus organizations. They refer students to important campus resources and know university academic standards, policies, and procedures in sufficient detail to provide students with accurate information while maintaining the strict confidentiality of student records. Their primary responsibility is to make students aware of all educational opportunities available at Coastal Carolina University.

Responsibilities of Advisors to Students

- To help create an action plan for graduating within a major field of study in a timely fashion (target eight semesters, four years)
- To help connect students with individuals and groups who can assist in creating a positive college experience, including, but not limited to: The Writing Center, computer labs, reference librarians, the Math Learning Center, the Foreign Language Instructional Center (FLIC), the Counseling Center and the Career Services.
- To promote student involvement in the Coastal Carolina University community.
- To help students explore career options in their major and other majors they might be considering.
- To promote creative and critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making as students make decisions about their career, their major and their classes.
- To provide support, advocacy and guidance for all advisees; as Home Depot states, “You can do it; we can help.”
The Role of the Student Advisee at Coastal Carolina University

Student advisees should realize that they are ultimately responsible for all aspects of their education, including choosing the classes in which they enroll and being aware of their current academic status. Student should feel that they can freely discuss personal interests, values, and goals with their advisor and should seek the advisor’s assistance in developing social, academic, and career goals while examining how these particular goals affect their lives. Students should ask their advisor how to use available campus resources to gather any relevant decision-making information. However, students must accept responsibility for all academic choices and decisions they make. They should be knowledgeable about academic standards, policies, and procedures, as well as be familiar with core curriculum, major/minor program, and graduation requirements. They should always consult with their advisor before making any important academic decisions, such as declaring a major, changing a major, dropping a class, taking a leave of absence, or withdrawing from the University.

Responsibility of the Advisee

- To double check all decisions made by the advisor in terms of courses and take responsibility for a successful college education.
- Be open and honest; if there is concern about any issue, bring it to the attention of the advisor so it can be resolved.
- Be prepared for appointments and show up. Classes fill quickly, so stay on top of deadlines and schedules.
- Be pro-active with your future. Take control, do some research on the major of your choice, and get to know your professors. Actively engage with the Coastal Carolina University community.
- Know and understand the tracking sheet for your major.
- Understand how policies effect you.

The Mission Statement of the Academic Advising Center

The Academic Advising Center at Coastal Carolina University is dedicated to student learning and individual development. The advising center will establish a link to each school and its faculty. We in the Advising center are concerned with student achievement, student retention, evaluation of core learning objectives, and ongoing feedback leading to long term growth of the university. Our university’s mission is to “develop students who are both knowledgeable in their chosen field and prepared to be productive, responsible, healthy citizens with a global perspective.” This philosophy will be reflected in the advising center where all advisors will:

- assist students with understanding and acceptance of themselves and others
- assist students in establishing their goals for college and life by understanding the relationship between their interests, skills, abilities, and values
- assist students in developing an educational plan consistent with their life goals and objectives
- increase the decision-making effectiveness of our students
Introduction

- provide accurate information on institutional policies, resources, procedures and additional programs in a timely manner
- identify the needs of our students early in the semester to refer students to institutional and community support services including, but not limited to, The Writing Center, Math Learning Center, Foreign Language Instructional Center, computer labs and other student services such as Counseling and Career Services
- teach students how to evaluate their progress toward goal fulfillment
- incorporate core technologies through My Coastal, Web Advisor and Blackboard

Coastal Carolina University is a public comprehensive liberal arts institution that seeks to develop students who are both knowledgeable in their chosen fields and prepared to be productive, responsible, healthy citizens with a global perspective. The Advising Center is cognizant of our mandate and will strive to continue the tradition of excellence in serving our students and the Coastal Carolina Community.

**Getting to Know the Student: The Importance of the Advisor/Advisee Relationship**

An important factor in advising is showing concern for your students as individuals. Students are more likely to value the information and follow the advice given to them when they recognize genuine interest and concern. Effective advising goes beyond routine course scheduling to helping students achieve their academic and career goals. The next few pages are intended to help you understand the importance of your interactions with advisees and to suggest ways to improve relationship building and communication with students.

**Effective Advising Through Personalized Interest**

One very important aspect of successful academic advising is providing the student with personalized attention. Some simple methods for accomplishing this are smiling, referring to the student by first name, and maintaining an attitude of acceptance and respect toward the student. Another method to communicate interest in the student is nonverbal communication. Face the student directly and maintain comfortable eye contact. When a student is in your office, they should command your complete attention. At the initial meeting, provide students with your contact information, including your card, phone number, and/or e-mail address, so that they can reach you when guidance or advice is needed.

**Effective Advising Through Listening**

The crucial element in effective advising is active listening. Advisors should use active listening to understand what a student is really saying. Pay careful attention to what the student is saying and their nonverbal communication (tone of voice, posture, expression, eye contact and affect). Always wait for the speaker to finish before responding and suspend judgment until you have heard the student. Keep your mind clear of distractions and focus on the student exclusively.

It is also a good technique while listening to clarify what you believe the student is saying. Note the content of the student’s messages and feelings and repeat back what you feel are key statements, making sure you have heard and understood them correctly. Communicate an
understanding of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors from the student’s frame of reference. It is also important to try to avoid shutting down the student by arguing, interpreting, judging, criticizing, diagnosing, ordering, moralizing or misinterpreting.

**Effective Advising Through Questioning**

The questions you ask a student can be those in which you seek information (closed questions) and those in which you try to build a relationship (open questions). It may be helpful to distinguish the types of questions and their purposes. Try to use open questions to encourage students to talk, rather than closed questions that can be answered in a few words. Closed questions can shut down communication. Some examples of open questions are:

**Open Questions**

“Could you tell me a little about your English class?”
“How do you feel about the test?”
“How are you balancing school with other aspects in your life?”
“What are your study habits?”
“How do you handle stress?”
“What are your plans for the future?”

**Effective Advising Through Relating to Students**

Some of the most useful advice the student can receive from the advising relationship is that which you relate to the student about yourself. Being able to speak from personal experience is a powerful way to enlighten students to the many possible paths their lives and careers can take. Whenever possible, you may want to relate, in a professional manner, personal experiences of making academic and career decisions. Such experiences can serve as examples to show students how choices made at the undergraduate level impact career development.

**Giving Effective Advice**

Academic advisors need to base their advice on their students’ career and life goals, interests, and ability to complete a proposed academic program. Academic advisors should gain an understanding of the student’s interests and goals while getting acquainted. It is also important to assess the student’s academic performance and tailor advice to that particular student. Some suggestions for assessing the student’s progress and helping individuals understand the options they have are to:

- Assess the core requirements, foundation courses, and electives to find out where the student stands.
- Create a four year plan with each student.
- Be aware of academic performance requirements for scholarships. Example: 30 credit hours from August 1<sup>st</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup> with a 3.0 GPA to maintain the SC Life Scholarship.
- Be tactful in your comments to students. Students are sensitive to comments from advisors about their academic ability. Be supportive while stressing personal responsibility and ownership.
- Compare current course load to past performance.
- Encourage students to reach their potential and focus on long-term goals for college and beyond.
- Look at the student’s course schedule to determine if course load is balanced.
• Pay attention to courses which may be offered only in a particular semester or during alternate years. This is key in trying to increase four year graduation rates.
• Take into account the student’s life outside of school such as work commitments, family responsibilities, and the amount of travel to and from school.
• Update and change the plan as necessary at each meeting.
• Use degree reports/transcripts to assess how the student is progressing academically.

Tracking sheets for every major can be found online at http://www.coastal.edu/advising/tracking.html

Process of Developmental Advising

1. Exploring Life Goals
   a. Know student characteristics and development
   b. Understand decision making processes
   c. Know principles of psychology and sociology
   d. Possess skill in counseling techniques
   e. Appreciate individual differences
   f. Believe in worth and dignity of all people
   g. Believe that all people have potential

2. Exploring Career Goals
   a. Know vocational fields
   b. Possess skill in test interpretation
   c. Understand the changing nature of work in society
   d. Accept all fields of work as worthy and dignified

3. Choosing Programs
   a. Know programs available at the university
   b. Know the requirements of programs
   c. Know university requirements for transfer programs
   d. Know how others have performed in the programs
   e. Know the success of program graduates

4. Selecting Courses
   a. Know available courses
   b. Know special information about courses (prerequisites, grade requirements, etc.)
   c. Know rules and regulations of the university
   d. Know honors courses
   e. Know instructors and their teaching styles
   f. Know course content
   g. Know advisees’ demonstrated abilities

5. Scheduling Classes
   a. Know course schedules
   b. Know all registration procedures
Introduction

c. Know advisees’ work and commuting schedules
d. Know transfer policies and procedures

6. Key Policies
   a. Know the withdrawal processes, including ramifications of falling below full-time student status
   b. Know the medical/psychological withdrawal process
   c. Know the grade forgiveness policy

   Adapted from T. O’Banion’s Developmental Advising Model

   Tips for Effective Advising

Be available and accessible.
Post and keep office hours and make certain that your advisees know them. If possible, encourage advisees to visit you periodically to let you know about their academic progress or concerns. You might also seek out advisees in a variety of informal campus settings.

Be a good listener.
The most immediate impulse of the conscientious, concerned advisor is to solve the student’s problems by making the decision and directing an outcome. In many cases, however, the student’s most pressing need is finding a good listener. Most of the time, solutions to problems become obvious as the advisee talks. An advisor who is an attentive listener often discovers that the advisee can solve the problem. Quality listening will allow the advisor to gain greater insights into the student’s problems.

Develop personal relationships with your advisees.
Demonstrate concern for each advisee. Become familiar with your students’ personal, educational, and career goals. The ideal relationship is both non-judgmental and non-threatening while capitalizing on the authority of the advisor. Although this balance is difficult to maintain, it can best be accomplished by demonstrating interest and helpful intent. Respect for students and concern for their welfare is paramount.

Make referrals to others when appropriate.
Good referral skills are essential in the advisor-advisee relationship. Advisors should:
   1) be totally at ease with making a referral
   2) give the student an understanding of why the referral is being made
   3) be knowledgeable about services provided by the referral agent
   4) help the student make an appointment with the referral agent
   5) walk the student to the appropriate office whenever possible or called for

Provide accurate information.
Accurate information is the cornerstone of quality advising. Advisors must assist students in understanding programs, policies and procedures and should acquaint advisees with the catalog, advisement planning worksheets/tracking sheets, and any updates. Advisors also should be aware of important campus resources available to their advisees and make referrals when appropriate.
**Take the initiative to make contact.**
Students, particularly those in their first year, are hesitant to make initial contact. The advisor who waits for the student to initiate contact will soon discover that contacts are few. Call the advisee, stop to chat on campus, or drop a note of invitation for students to visit your office. Use Web-Advisor and Blackboard to stay in touch with your advisees electronically.

**How Academic Advising Relates to Student Retention and Success**

The ability of a higher education institution to retain students is attributed to the quality of the institution and its concern with the satisfaction and success of its students. Recent reports from the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey indicate that academic advising effectiveness is one of the most important concerns of students who attend Coastal Carolina University. Students who were surveyed report that they want academic advisors who are approachable and knowledgeable about major requirements and campus resources. They also desire advisors who express a genuine concern for their success as individuals and who assist students in making goals that allow the achievement of their educational objectives. Effective academic advisors realize that their advisory role is not just relevant to the quality of Coastal Carolina University as an institution of higher education, but more importantly, it is vital to ensuring that all students at the University are successful in achieving their academic and personal goals.

**First Year Advisors in the University Academic Center**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Information:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agatha O’Brien-Gayes, Director of Academic Advising:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aobrieng@coastal.edu">aobrieng@coastal.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assorted majors</td>
<td>(843) 349-2720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frances Richmond</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Richmond@coastal.edu">Richmond@coastal.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All majors in the Wall College of Business</td>
<td>(843) 349-6529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with the last names M-Z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Paschuck</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mpaschuc@coastal.edu">mpaschuc@coastal.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Undeclared</td>
<td>(843) 349-6528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All majors in the Wall College of Business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with the last names A-L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcella Greene</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Marcella@coastal.edu">Marcella@coastal.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Undeclared</td>
<td>(843) 349-6534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cara Lopresti</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cloprest@coastal.edu">cloprest@coastal.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Biology</td>
<td>(843) 349-6535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sociology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Contact Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelli Moses Dolfi:</td>
<td>Contact Information:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kmoses@coastal.edu">kmoses@coastal.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(843) 349-6541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marine Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry Spitze</td>
<td>Contact Information:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kspitze@coastal.edu">kspitze@coastal.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(843) 349-6514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All majors in the Spadoni College of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Huffman:</td>
<td>Contact Information:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:hhuffman@coastal.edu">hhuffman@coastal.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(843) 349-2941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All majors in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All honors students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>