

# Tips from the Advising “Trenches”

*Sage advice from many of Millikin’s all-star academic advisors*

## **Approaching Your Advisees**

- Contact advisees at the beginning of the semester to remind them that you are available for consultation at any time.
- Conduct individual interviews with all advisees to get to know the interests and “special skills” of your advisees. Then, pass along information about these interests and skills as it becomes available throughout the school year.
- Obtain the cell phone numbers of your advisees in the event that you need to reach them quickly.

## **Acknowledging & Challenging Your Advisees**

- Utilize the Student Accolade system through MU Online to acknowledge publically your advisees’ good work.
- Challenge advisees who are excelling to consider graduate study.
- Post the names of advisees on the Dean’s List or receiving other recognition on Departmental Bulletin Board.
- Remind students that it is their responsibility to understand university, school and major requirements.
- Use missed advising appointments as “teachable moments” regarding proper professional behavior.

## **Supporting Your Advisees through Difficulty**

- Insist on a face-to-face meeting for advisees receiving multiple academic alerts.
- Help guide advisees working through personal issues to the appropriate resources through campus-wide referrals.
- Reach out to advisees who are struggling; they may be reluctant to seek out help on their own.
- Encourage struggling students to speak with their instructors and obtain a tutor.
- Include athletic coaches when communicating with unresponsive advisees.
- Focus meetings with struggling advisees on goal setting and an individualized plan for improvement.
- Consult with staff in the Student Success office on particularly difficult cases.
- Take the time to listen before offering advice.
- Encourage advisees struggling in their major to utilize the Career Center services in order to uncover new interests and abilities.
- Encourage advisees struggling with study habits or questioning their educational goals to consult with a staff member in the Student Success office.
- When meeting with advisees about academic alerts that they have received, emphasize any recommendations that the instructor submitting the alert has made.

## **Advising Tools & Advising Partners**

- Remind advisees about the University Bulletin (found online at [www.millikin.edu/bulletin](http://www.millikin.edu/bulletin)).
- Include staff in the Student Success office on critical communication with your advisees.
- Consult Millikin’s Advising Website (found online at [www.millikin.edu/advising](http://www.millikin.edu/advising)).
- Submit an academic alert for students who miss class and exams, who fail to submit assignments, or who are failing the course.
- Keep careful notes regarding advisee’s goals, etc.

- Review advisee transcripts (available via MU Online) and prior advising notes before each advising appointment.
- Utilize midterm grades as an opportunity to provide feedback to your advisees on their academic performance.
- Utilize the CAPP degree audit to help advisees lay out their plan of study, including what requirements remain and how proposed changes might alter the plan.
- Utilize the websites of professional organizations to obtain up-to-date career counseling information.
- Encourage advisees to utilize the resources of the Career Center before they begin their job search (e.g., work study and off-campus jobs, internships, career search, job search).
- Include athletic coaches on critical communication with your advisees. Coaches have strong relationships with their student-athletes and can assist you in communicating the primacy of academics.
- Frame the 8-semester plan of study as an illustration of degree completion, but place an advisee's personal needs at the center of advising.

### **Advising as Teaching**

- View your role as an advisor as that of a coach. Serve as a sounding board for your advisees, guide them as they work to overcome obstacles, and advise them as they make decision relating to their coursework.
- Remind advisees that advising goes beyond scheduling. In fact, remind advisees that scheduling is primarily their responsibility.
- Use advising as a way to encourage students to build positive relationships with faculty.
- Encourage advisees to gain multiple perspectives before making big decisions.
- Utilize advising appointments as a time to discuss academic and career goals, not just a time to work out scheduling issues.
- Encourage advisees to begin thinking about internships early in their college career.
- Encourage advisees to build professional networks.
- Do not shy away from opportunities to advise and mentor students for whom you are not the advisor of record.
- Begin advising sessions by asking students what they hope to accomplish. Explore options, help set goals, and utilize the advisee's knowledge, skills and abilities to develop an individualized plan of study that leverages coursework, service learning, pre-professional experiences, and extracurricular activities.
- Help advisees understand the opportunities that education can provide, and do not allow them to feel "boxed in" by their major.

### **Scheduling Day Advice**

- Meet with advisees as a group prior to Scheduling Day to review tools, procedures, and advising expectations.
- Communicate your Scheduling Day expectations to your advisees (completed course worksheet, etc.).
- Insist that advisees who come to advising appointments unprepared (scheduling worksheet not completed, etc.) make another appointment.
- Review advisee's planned course schedules to ensure that they have included meal times, breaks, time for study, etc. every day.