Title: The Importance of Mentoring and Advising Graduate Students – Individual Perspectives

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Abstract:

Feedback from graduate students has indicated a desire for more individualized guidance from faculty advisors during their program of study. Panelists will present their perspectives on graduate student mentorship, advising and individualizing their plan of study.

Learning objectives

Understand the needs for individualized advising.

Develop strategies to include more individualized mentorship and advising for your students.

Recognize the need for faculty buy-in of individualized advising.

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Part 1 – Background

1A. Rationale for Individualized advising

Below are several references that address this issue of individualized advising.

Adult learner advising experiences have been positively correlated with retention, persistence, and alumni donations (CAEL, 2000; Flint, 2005; Frey, 2007; Hensley & Kinser, 2001; Lowe & Toney, 2000; Noel-Levitz, 2008; Noel-Levitz & CAEL, 2011). Crisp (2010)reported a positive association between one's advising experience and his or her grade-point average (GPA), classroom performance, ability to think critically, persistence, future aspirations, and confidence to succeed academically. However, Noel-Levitz (2008) identified advising as one of the four most poorly addressed priorities of adult learners; of all the factors identified for meeting their goals, students reported advising as their greatest need and the area with which they were most dissatisfied.
https://www.nacadajournal.org/doi/full/10.12930/NACADA-13-044

In her article, Dean Stimpson eloquently identifies the mission, or "deep purpose," of graduate education as three-fold. 1. "… a place where the most promising and lively minds of several generations come together to work on the central problems of the time and of the disciplines" and "breaks through conventional wisdom." 2. Graduate school educates the "next generation of scholars, researchers, intellectuals, artists, and educators." 3. Graduate schools "embody an ideal of a community of advanced inquiry (Stimpson, p. B7)

Making quality advising part of promotion and tenure guidelines is one way to help change the culture of advising in departments.

1B. Multiple mentorship model and generational considerations

Multiple Mentorship Model

"A mentor is someone who makes a concerted effort to assist another individual to become a successful professional (National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine, 1997)....the ideal mentor possesses a multitude of attributes and skills....the mentor/mentee relationship should be characterized by mutual respect, trust, understanding, and empathy (National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering Institute of Medicine, 1997). **Therefore, the ideal mentor has multiple roles**....Mentors are **advisors**, people with career experience willing to share their knowledge; **supporters**, people who give emotional and moral encouragement; **tutors**, people who give specific feedback on one's performance; **masters**, in the sense of employers to whom one is apprenticed; **sponsors**, sources of information about and aid in obtaining opportunities; **models**, of identity, of the kind of person one should be to be an academic. "

Cole and Wright-Harp Multiple Mentor Model: the need for students to have multiple mentors of varied skills, ages, and traits who can meet their individual needs. Given the fact that no one mentor can possibly address the varying needs of mentees as they matriculate through graduate school and make the transition into their professional careers, one can never have too many mentors

Academic Mentor

Clinical Mentor

Research Mentor

Peer Mentor

Career/Professional Development Mentor

Generational implications

- Understanding **generational differences** and what this implies for advising strategies and communication with our students.

Generation Z, as they have been coined, consist of those born in 1995 or later. This generation makes up 25.9% of the United States population, the largest percentage, and contribute $44 billion to the American economy. By 2020, they will account for one-third of the U.S. population...A **"Millennial"** is a person reaching young adulthood around the year 2000. Generation Z (also known as Post-Millennials, the iGeneration, Founders, Plurals, or the Homeland Generation) is the demographic cohort following the Millennials.

Part 2. Strategies for advising students: Individual perspectives

Inter-faculty communication about student issues

Some programs staff students at faculty meetings. Another inter-faculty communication tool is a central repository of performance that is used by faculty to log concerns at the end of each term or when they arise. When appropriate, the academic advisor or clinic director follows up. For more serious concerns, the student may be referred to a formal Student Review Committee.

Multiple Advisor Teams

Some programs currently use multiple advising teams consisting of [for example] (a) a primary tenure/tenure-track advisor (b) clinical advisor (c) research advisor

> Primary advisor: Each student is assigned a primary academic advisor who meets with the student each term to discuss his/her progress, to complete the evaluation for the previous term, and to discuss what to expect during the next phase of the program. An important aspect of this meeting is the "check-in" with the student to query him / her regarding obstacles, needs, questions, and to identify potential resources to address these. All advisors are aware of the students' performance status from our centralized repository of performance and from faculty meetings in which student issues are discussed. Advisors may not be aware of any 'cracks' in the student's life that may be impacting performance or creating challenges for the student.

> Clinic director: the clinic director holds both group advising meeting with the students and individual meetings. Group advising meetings are informational in nature, for example: providing information needed for clinic orientation, on-boarding processes, off-campus rotations and timelines. Individual meetings focus on students' individual clinical interests and developing career goals and help the clinic director plan clinical experiences that best meet students' goals. The clinic director also serves as an advisor for any issues that may arise with off-campus preceptors.

> Research advisor: the research advisor mentors the student research projects (required) from inception to completion of the final document and presentation. Ad-hoc advising teams (e.g. research mentor and program directors – or advisory) may be formed if a student is not making sufficient progress toward completion of the project.

> Flexible advisor roles: Faculty advisors may assume different roles during the course of individualized advising, acting as a counselor, social worker (identifying resources), career coach, and clinical mentor, and advocate.   Not all faculty are comfortable with all roles, so flexible advising teams may be helpful (see below).

Students in trouble & flexible advising schemes

Ad-hoc advising teams: Faculty may meet as a group with the student; other times it's the academic advisor and the student alone. Some students may respond and open up more when it's a one on one meeting.

Advising schemes often become more fluid for students who are experiencing trouble in academic and clinic performance. Although the advisor remains in the loop, students may opt to discuss their intervention processes and/or changing career trajectories with other faculty with whom they work very closely (e.g. clinic GA may have more in-depth meetings with clinic directors) – when feasible, group

advising pairs (e.g. faculty implementing intervention and the advisor) may meet to discuss progress and to identify and activate campus and community resources for the students.

Occasionally, the 'chemistry' between the student and one or more advisors is not optimal and may limit effective advising. Strategies for dealing with this situation will be discussed.

Mentoring professionalism

Occasionally, students will need specific mentoring for professionalism. Typical problems include not responding to important emails, chronic time management problems resulting in missed deadlines for registration and onboarding paperwork, and inappropriate clinic interactions or behavior. If professionalism issues arise within the context of off-campus clinic, direct communication between the supervisor and the program can be very helpful. Interventions for professionalism can be effective, especially within the context of career planning and preparation.

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Part 3. Faculty Buy-In

Campus resources for advisors

Advisors are encouraged to consult with faculty and staff in student services roles for advice. For example, the associate dean of student services has provided valuable input regarding students in trouble. Also the campus student judicial review team can help advisors understand the appropriate action to take for major and minor infractions of student conduct.

Building community

The success in building a cohesive community of students and faculty is influenced the culture of your university, department and cohorts of students. Strategies include building mentoring relationships between first and second year graduate students and mentoring relationships between undergraduate and graduate students. Mentoring of graduate students by program alumni can also help support students' professional and career development.

Working with faculty

Some faculty are not comfortable having the hard conversations with students. And even those that are comfortable they may not deliver the information in a way that it can be received by the student. Modeling the "tough conversations" is a good training tool for faculty as well as helping faculty understand the purpose of the conversation is not to punish the student but rather to help the student get back on track.

Some faculty need help understanding that just because you might not like the student's personality or you don't "see them as an SLP or AuD" that doesn't mean that they will not successful.