Andrew Schroeder

**Academic Advising Philosophy Statement**

**Advising is a Gateway**

I believe the purpose of academic advising is to be a gateway for the student to navigate the intricacies of the world we know as higher education. As a strong advisor, my goal is to meet a student at the intersection of their critical development as a person, and be a facilitator in empowering them to take ownership of their learning and development; core to the mission of the Student Success Center. I strive to connect students with resources across campus when necessary, and have an obligation to develop important relationships with campus partners across the university to support the student (NACADA Core Values).

**Advising is Learning (For the Student)**

My critical goal as an advisor is to be an educator for the student, supporting them in reaching a place of higher learning (NACADA Core Values). Educating students involves building their skills and providing them with tools they can understand and use independently. Being a strong advisor requires constant, thoughtful planning about how I can teach and challenge students in several core areas including: how to best navigate college, understanding the curriculum (including internship and study abroad opportunities), and building awareness regarding policies and procedures of the university. Probably of greater importance, however, is my focus on teaching the student how to learn about themselves, their needs, and their interconnectedness with the diverse world around them. Getting students to this place of learning is rooted in Hemwall & Trachte’s (2005) integrative learning theory, where the student is the engaged author of their knowledge. It is also seen in Baxter Magolda’s (1992) model of epistemological reflection, where the student’s way of learning becomes more contextual over time. In the spirit of Thomas Merton, “We must continue to instill our students with the knowledge and skills to develop solutions and opportunities.”

**Advising is Learning (For the Advisor)**

Academic advising is a constant learning opportunity for me to see my higher education world as the student sees it, and understand each student I work with for his or her true self. My goal is to recognize the unnecessary roadblocks the university is creating for the student, and be attentive to how the university is falling short in fostering the success of the student with the current procedures and policies in place (NACADA Core Values). Advising interactions provide a daily window of introspection, giving me prompts to improve both personally and professionally. I am granted the powerful opportunity to learn from one of the best teachers on campus: the student. I can never stop taking advantage of this opportunity. For the betterment of the student, this learning opportunity challenges me to be a scholar-practitioner.

**Advising is Embracing Potential**

Many academic advising conversations, driven by intervention approaches, can easily be viewed from the lens of the student deficit model. This approach, without intent, can lend itself to the glass half empty philosophy. I believe that in all advising conversations, as is core to our mission at Bellarmine of “respecting each individual’s intrinsic value and dignity,” I can never lose sight of embracing the potential that exists for student success (NACADA Core Values). This does not mean I ignore the deficit, it means I seek to help students see their strengths and full potential. These concepts of development, grounded in the identity development theories of those like Marcia (1966), and Chickering (1969), emphasize my efforts to play a role in helping students understand themselves and their identity, and be able to flourish.

**Advising is Challenging the Student but Saving Judgement**

Being an advisor is a balancing act between connecting and directing. Wherever the balance, I serve students best when I am challenging them. At its most difficult time of challenge, rooted in Festinger’s (1957) cognitive dissonance theory, I play a critical role in increasing a student’s awareness about the incongruence that exists between their reality and expectations. I provide a safe space and sounding board for a student to confront and explore these incongruences and challenges. I have an inherent responsibility to create a space where the student feels challenged and welcomed at the same time. This framework of engagement is critical for me developing purposeful, ongoing relationships with the student.

**Advising is Care for the Student**

My advising is rooted in care for the student. This ranges from celebrating the student’s greatest successes to working through frustrations experienced regarding the student’s progress or inconsistencies. My approach is framed in a mindset of care. This does not mean that I should not challenge students and hold them accountable for their actions, but I must also approach each student with compassion. I am genuine in my advising approach and committed to the students and their success.

**References**

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