

Academic Advising Philosophy Statement

Laura Weinstein

For the past 12 years, I have dedicated myself to the profession of academic advising. My dedication stems from strong belief that the pursuit of higher education has both an intrinsic value and is the most equalizing force in our society. Regardless of a student's ethnic, socio-economic, or geographic background, attainment of a college degree provides an opportunity for intellectual, personal, and economic advancement.

I am motivated by the sense of optimism I feel every day when I walk around a college campus. I see a student who just graduated from high school excited about the limitless possibilities ahead of her, a single mother who knows that earning a credential will secure a better future for her and her children, and a refugee who has faced unimaginable challenges but perseveres to obtain a degree. I also see students who appear lost but know that by enrolling in college classes they have taken a step in the right direction even though their path is unclear.

My mission as an academic advisor is to help these students develop their own unique definition of success and design an individualized pathway to achieve this success. To fulfill my mission, I utilize an appreciative advising approach that focuses on building a strong relationship with my students to better understand their strengths and skills. I believe that when a student meets with an academic advisor, it should be a transformative experience where students leave with a greater understanding of who they are and feel empowered to progress toward a clear educational or career goal. While professors facilitate students' intellectual growth, academic advisors serve as a change agent who guide students in harnessing this new power.

Because all students face challenges or barriers that can affect their academic performance, I aim to create a welcoming environment where students feel comfortable discussing non-academic concerns and develop strategies for addressing them. It is no longer possible for higher education institutions to focus solely on classroom learning and ignore the very real issues that students encounter on a regular basis. Academic advisors are uniquely situated to make effective and meaningful referrals to on and off-campus student resources that enhance the ability for student success.

There are numerous studies that demonstrate the strong connection between academic advising and student persistence. A recent Civitas Learning report found that academic advising has a greater impact on student success compared to thousands of other student success initiatives.¹ These findings only confirm what I observe after every advising appointment. When a student comes in my office looking overwhelmed and leaves looking relieved and hopeful, then I know that I have accomplished my mission.

¹ Civitas Learning (2019) *What Really Works: A Review of Student Success Initiatives*
<https://go.civitaslearning.com/clarity>