Faculty Advisor Training and Development: A Blended Approach

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Goals for this session

- Examine the pros and cons of several different delivery systems for faculty advising training and development
- Reinforce the importance of establishing desired outcomes of a faculty advising training program
- Demonstrate an example of a successful online faculty advising course in Moodle
- Review data collected from faculty advisors and discuss future improvements to the training program
- Encourage participants to consider and envision their own faculty advisor training program
Quick Facts: Columbia College Chicago

- Population: just over 10,000 students, graduate and undergraduate
- Private, urban, 4-year institution located in downtown Chicago
- Focus on high quality education in the arts and media industries, grounded in the liberal arts and sciences
- Generous undergraduate admissions policy
Quick Facts: Columbia’s Advising Model

• Implemented fall 2009
• “Shared” model between College Advisors (professional staff in centralized unit) and Faculty Advisors (in academic departments)
• College Advisors work with all new undergraduate students to assist with transition to Columbia, choice of major, overall degree requirements, and understanding the advising process
• Faculty Advisors work with sophomores and above who have declared their major to assist with understanding major requirements and preparing students for their chosen field
School of Fine & Performing Arts
Faculty Advising Program

- 8 academic departments
- 134 total Faculty Advisors
- Individual caseload sizes vary greatly, from 6 to 66 total advisees
- Average caseload size varies by department, from 16 to 51 total advisees
Advising Inventory Results

What roadblocks are you aware of that get in the way of good faculty advising?

There is no formal training for new Faculty Advisors.

All Faculty Advisors need a better understanding of:
• how to successfully use advising technology and systems
• academic policies and procedures
• the unique advising needs of transfer students
• curriculum changes and degree requirements
• where to get help when needed
• what a good advising session looks like
• the student support services available on campus
Challenges to Effective Faculty Advisor Training

- Differing advising cultures by department
- Lack of motivation and commitment
- Different learning preferences among faculty
- Differing skill levels with technology
- Not enough time
- No common day/time/space
- Faculty workload
Desired Outcomes of the Faculty Advising Training and Development Program, School of Fine & Performing Arts

• Understand the college-wide advising model and its implementation in the School of Fine & Performing Arts
• Articulate the roles of students, faculty and staff in the advising process
• Correctly locate and operate the online Advising Tools in the OASIS Faculty Portal
• Understand the function of each of the Advising Tools
• Utilize the appropriate Advising Tool in a given advising situation
• Understand key academic policies at Columbia College Chicago
• Be familiar with effective practices in academic advising
• Discuss FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act) guidelines with different constituencies and apply appropriate FERPA guidelines in a given situation
Evolution of the Faculty Advising Training and Development Model, School of Fine & Performing Arts

- 2009-10: Advising assessment, Faculty Advising Retreat, 5 sections of Moodle course with 24 total faculty
- 2010-11: Began new faculty orientation session, advising resources assessment, 4 sections of updated Moodle course with 27 total faculty
- 2011-12: Began new faculty advisor mentor program, added departmental advising workshops, 2 sections of updated Moodle course with 18 total faculty
- 2012-13: 1 section of updated Moodle course with 8 total faculty
- 2013-14: Began spring brush-up training, 1 section of updated Moodle course with 10 total faculty
Current Faculty Advisor Training and Development Model, School of Fine & Performing Arts

- New faculty orientation session: A, B
- Online Faculty Advising Course in Moodle: A-F
- Faculty Advising Mentor Program: A-F
- Departmental Advising Workshops: A-F
- Spring Advising Brush-Up Session: A-F
- Academic Coordinator Resource: A-F

Outcomes:
A. Understand the advising model
B. Articulate advising roles
C. Successfully use advising tools
D. Understand academic policies
E. Be familiar with effective advising practice
F. Understand FERPA

Blue = new faculty
Green = new and continuing faculty
Benefits of Multiple Delivery Methods

Online Format

Benefits:
- Convenient for faculty
- Draws faculty together from multiple departments
- Faculty work at their own pace
- Information is readily available
- Broad overview of information

Drawbacks:
- Some faculty are uncomfortable with technology
- Spring 2011 survey revealed a strong desire for face-to-face interaction among faculty
- Requires grading and ongoing engagement

Face-to-Face Format

Benefits:
- Tailored to department’s individual needs
- Provides depth into fewer topics
- Addresses concerns on the spot
- Meets our faculty’s need for personal interaction

Drawbacks:
- Time and space constraints
- Pace is sometimes determined by the least prepared
Online Faculty Advising Training Course in Moodle

A quick tour through the course
Talk about advising in your department:

- “Fashion Studies department has two majors, Fashion Design and Fashion Business. I am teaching in the Fashion Business area. Advising is taken very seriously in our department (I believe that's the same with other departments). Currently, I will be sitting with my mentor to see what she discusses with her advisees. I think this will help me a lot understanding the advising process in Columbia. Also, since Fashion Business majors take up different kind of careers like in product development, buying, planning, styling, distribution & logistics, or small business operations, we are constantly interacting about advising students with each other in our faculty meetings. I am also very impressed that a moodle course has been created for advising training instead of just giving out notes/process.” –Faculty Advisor, Fashion Studies

- “I asked a number of colleagues about advising in Arts Management. [I learned that] it’s an exploratory experience with the students in which faculty advise them on their next steps in terms of curriculum that would best meet their career aspirations. Advising presents a number of challenges in terms of awareness of all the curricular options available to students and the responsibility of advising a path or direction for them. Advising is both easy and challenging. Easy in that Arts Management has very clear curricular options since our curricular was streamlined. But challenging in understanding a students direct needs in terms of career aspirations and needs for development.” -Faculty Advisor, Arts Management
Using “Faculty Comments:”

- “I like to summarize meetings (i.e. student will speak with instructor for extra assistance in the business practices course; will meet again during registration period to discuss progress). In our department this is helpful for others who may also be advising the student and helps bring them up to date.” – Faculty Advisor, Art + Design

- “Faculty comments is an area where we could begin to track the student's clinical interests, and maybe issues that will help determine appropriate placements for them. For example, "Student expressed interest in adults with chronic mental illness" or "Student has some professional experience providing direct service to older adults." The objective language is similar in some ways to clinical reporting on clients--A client's record always has the potential to become a document that must be shared. Therefore, aiming to stick with "facts" and eliminate subjective language is important for OUR protection as much as it is for the student's sake.” – Faculty Advisor, Creative Arts Therapies
How do you start the advising session?

• “Theoretically, I would approach it as I do my teaching....to attempt to engage each student by truly seeing them and truly listening and looking for clues to what is going on (if they are verbally uncommunicative). Asking questions and again, listening to what is said and what is not said. To ask what classes are really working for them, how do they find Columbia, are there any ongoing issues or problems? I did find the three tier approach that Keri wrote to be helpful. Especially that students really are looking for mentorship, a sense of what's to come after school, a translation of how the classes translate to life after college.” –Faculty Advisor, Theatre

• “Developing a connection with students I think is the best way to start, then leading into how they are feeling with their classes and any challenges they are facing. I don't like the word "problem" and would prefer to help students see that while we have challenges all around us, it is the opportunity or potential that deserves our attention. I would then review their "advising guide" and discuss their aspirations to ensure they are a) enrolled in the most suitable classes and b) on course to graduate when they want to.” –Faculty Advisor, Arts Management
Topic 4 Forum

How will you incorporate “Best Practices and Core Values” in your advising practice?

• “An advisor should always protect and inform the student of their academic freedom, for I think too often the focus is "for employment" or "to graduate" you must do this, this and this. If we as advisors draw from across disciplines and across learning approaches in how we advise students, and encourage students to pursue their "learning interests and needs" we model for our students "academic freedom.” –Faculty Advisor, Arts Management

• “The "Best Practices and Core Values" reading is rather parallel to a number of counseling principles that we are teaching the students to practice themselves as developing professionals! It also sends a clear message to not consider advising as one more obligation, but to value its essential quality for creating the most beneficial educational experience we can for each student.” –Faculty Advisor, Creative Arts Therapies
Examples of face-to-face Sessions in Academic Departments

- Advising Transfer Students
- Understanding the Advising Model
- Using OASIS Advising Tools
- Student Advisee Case Studies
- Understanding Academic Policy
- Anatomy of the Advising Session
What Faculty Are Saying

Improved my understanding of the Columbia College Chicago advising model:

- Agree 60%
- Strongly Agree 40%

Helped me better understand my role as a faculty advisor, and the roles of other advisors on campus:

- Agree 80%
- Strongly Agree 20%
What Faculty Are Saying

Taught me how to use advising tools:

- Strongly Agree: 20%
- Agree: 60%

Helped me understand academic policy and its implementation in an advising setting:

100%
What Faculty Are Saying

Introduced me to best practices in advising:
- Agree 60%
- Strongly Agree 40%

Helped me to understand how FERPA is administered at the College:
- Agree 80%
- Strongly Agree 20%
What Faculty Are Saying

“I feel so much better about diving into the advising pool now. Thank you!”

“The discussions generated by the questions helped us get great advice from each other with new ideas from the different participants.”

“The layout of the course was easily do-able and not overwhelming.”
What Faculty Are Saying

“It is difficult to work in Moodle and have OASIS open at the same time.”

“Break down the advising guide assignment into smaller assignments with screen shots explaining what every part of the advising guide means.”
Future Enhancements

• All faculty advisors added to Moodle course automatically
• How-to videos demonstrating online advising tools
Discussion

Q+A

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