

## Chapter 3

# Academic Advising and Student Persistence: Understanding the Role of Academic Advising and Connection to Student Persistence

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Academic advising is at the forefront of conversations in higher education (Drake, 2011). The mentoring relationship that occurs between students and advisors can be beneficial for both students and institutions, yet academic advising programs may not offer a quality mentoring relationship able to impact student success. When properly constructed, quality academic advising can have a positive impact on a student's undergraduate experience, as well as directly connecting to student persistence. If not constructed properly, the adverse reaction on student success may occur, and particularly can negatively impact student retention. The following chapter will explore quality academic advising, the means by which quality academic advising can be provided, the connection of quality academic advising to student persistence and methods to assess the academic advising process.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

While much has changed in higher education since developmental advising was defined by Crookston in 1972, the foundation of providing students with holistic development through academic advising still remains relevant to higher education. The act of academic advising teaches students how to navigate academic progress and identify goals while empowering students to take the lead in moving towards their future goals. Academic advising consists of the relationship between a student (the advisee) and a faculty or staff member (the advisor). Particularly, academic advisors are instrumental in students' academic progression and development. The role of an academic advisor is to coach the student through academics and to build the student's confidence for success. While advising does not normally take place in a traditional classroom, advising is an opportunity to teach the student, develop the student's autonomy, and prepare the student to achieve his or her current and future goals. Furthermore, the relationship between the student and advisor should be a point of contact with the institution for the student to receive information about academic progression and to receive guidance as it relates to the student's personal, professional, and academic success.

The above paragraph may sound like a text book description of academic advising. It may seem far from being realistic. Think about institutions' current academic advising structures and processes. These structures and processes have the potential to utilize academic advising programs to maximize students' potential and increase student persistence. Academic advising can also be incorporated into students' academics and can serve as a foundation for students' success and completion. Yet, the realistic evaluation of current academic advising structures and processes may leave institutions with a few shortcomings; academic advising is often not provided adequate resources and is an undervalued student service in higher education. Institutions believe that they are providing quality academic advising for students yet do not fully understand the role of academic advising or how to make academic advising thrive on their campus. While the function of academic advising may change depending on a student's classification, the outcomes of advising should remain the same: to provide quality results for students and institutions.

When constructed properly, academic advising can be the tool to strengthen the student population success in an institution, while further enhancing other areas of the campus community. In particular, academic advising is linked to student persistence (Kuh & Hu, 2001; Nagda et al., 1998; Pascarella, 1980; Turner & Thompson, 2014). The purpose of this chapter is to understand academic advising and its connection to student persistence. Focusing on one method of delivering academic advising will not meet the needs of all campuses; there are fundamental aspects of academic

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