

Department of Social Work Statement on Academic Advising

The Department of Social Work is committed to providing quality advising. Academic advising is an integral part of the educational process. The primary purpose of academic advising is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans compatible with the attainment of their life goals. *Students are helped to evaluate their suitability for the profession and to set realistic expectations for themselves in terms of pursuing a career as a social worker. Academic advising is viewed as a continuous and developmental process of clarification and evaluation.*

Effective advising is characterized by a good working relationship between the advisor and the student, which adapts to the experiences and changing needs of the student. Quality advising also requires understanding, affirming, and respecting the individual differences within the University community. The *Academic Advising Coordinator* is expected to develop the knowledge, experience, and interest for successfully communicating with students in a genuine, sincere, accurate, and confidential manner. The student is expected to understand University and program requirements and accept the responsibility for fulfilling them. Together the *Academic Advising Coordinator* and the student are expected to maintain a professional and mutually respectful relationship as they review the student's progress toward the attainment of educational objectives.

Accurate advising is an interactive process in which both the student and the advisor share the responsibility. The *Academic Advising Coordinator* serves as a facilitator of communication, as a source of accurate information, as a coordinator of academic planning, as an assistant in helping the student to solve academically related problems, and as an agent of referral to other professionals and campus resources.

The ultimate responsibility for decision making about life goals and educational plans rests with the individual students. The Academic Advising Coordinator assists by helping to identify and assess alternatives and the consequences of decisions.

Responsibilities of the Social Work Academic Advising Coordinator:

Inherent in the advisement process is the need to help the student understand the nature of the university, *the college, the department and a social work education.* Given the above, the Advising Coordinator must:

- Have a thorough understanding of:
 - the General Education Program
 - institutional requirements
 - major requirements and course sequencing
- Know University and College policies and procedures.
- Be available to students by maintaining adequate office hours and appointment times that are reasonable to accommodate students' needs.
- Be sensitive to the unique needs of individual students.

- Discuss linkages between academic preparation, the world-of-work, and life goals.
- Provide the student with information about alternatives, limitations, and possible consequences of academic decisions.
- Monitor student advisees' progress toward educational/career goals through the maintenance of accurate student records.
- Refer students to appropriate resources for needed assistance and serve as ombudsperson (advocate) for advisees.
- Participate in professional development activities related to academic advisement.
- Exhibit the professional rapport necessary to maintain congenial relationships with advisees and for maintaining a positive, constructive attitude toward advising in general.

Responsibilities of the Social Work Student

The student must accept the idea of a university education. To have a successful educational experience requires developing a commitment to the advisement process that entails:

- Being knowledgeable about the academic policies, procedures, and requirements (including graduation requirements) of:
 - the University
 - the College
 - students' program major(s)
 - students' program minor(s)
 - the General Education Program
- Planning the academic program *plan with the Academic Advising Coordinator* to meet degree requirements.
- Maintaining personal copies of *the academic program plan, current DARS report, general education evaluations, transfer credit evaluations, and any other important University documents.*
- Knowing the name and office location of the Academic Advising Coordinator, and actively participating in the advising and scheduling process *by meeting with the Coordinator a minimum of once a semester.*
- Taking advantage of the information and advice provided by *faculty mentors, Academic Advising Coordinator and/or the Academic Admission and Retention Committee.*
- Seeking and reviewing relevant information for decision-making.
- Developing social, academic, and career goals, and examining how these goals will affect the *student's life.*
- Understanding that the student must accept final responsibility for decisions regarding personal goals and educational goals, and satisfying graduation requirements.