

A Description of My Advising Philosophy

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When I engage with students in an advising capacity, I like to think about what I can learn from them first so that I can best help guide them through their decision-making and in what they have going on. The easiest description of my advising philosophy starts with a foundation of theory. I start from a theory base and build upon that with personal experiences, educational learnings, institutional studies, and from my colleagues in the thick of their own journeys. A major part that influences how I advise students, is based on my personal experiences, including my collegiate journey with having experience from a community college level and transferring, to getting involved and using campus resources to move forward to graduating.

To give my advising philosophy a base to start from, I tend to utilize a mixture of a few different student development theories and some generic life-sustaining theories. The student development theories I think of most often are identity theories that explore privilege and oppression, Rendon's Validation Theory on validating their experiences and journeys, and emphasizing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. I like to use a blend of all of these when I go into an advising session. I start by making sure that they have what they need to be sustainable, building on validating what they have experienced and what their viewpoints and opinions are, and opening up with their social identities to really lay the groundwork with how they work as a person and where their priorities are placed as I navigate the session, as to not invalidate or outcast any identities, experiences, or needs that they hold dear.

Moving beyond having the base of theory, I like to gather information from the student about who they are. Diving beyond the identity, and finding out about where they have been, where they want to go, who they want to be, and what they want to do. Using this information, I

can get a better sense of eliminating areas or ideas that wouldn't help the student, and to focus the energy into areas that gets the student to who they want to be. Using the core values that academic advisors use, such as Caring, Empowerment, and Respect, I can better serve these students in creating a welcoming space and allow them to have the power to direct their plans after the session (*NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising.*, 2017). Also using Bloom's Appreciative Advising framework, as shared by guest speaker Alyssa Patricio, in creating a space that fosters growth of thought and allows for students to guide where they want to go based on the answers they provide, is a model that pushes students to hold the power themselves, and the knowledge to ask for what they need (personal communication, September 13, 2021, *What Is Appreciative Advising?*, 2018). Using this framework and blending in my personal take as shared before, allows for a better experience that can be personalized towards each student I interact within an advising session.

Another aspect that I didn't think about before this course, was the influence I hold when I am working with students. A podcast that was introduced to us this semester touched on topics and stories of things I have learned from the past, at different times, and combined them into one thought, and expanded upon the influence we hold (Vedantam, 2021). In this podcast, Vedantam shares about different psychological experiments that emphasize how much influence we hold over other people. It was from this podcast, where I was enlightened by this phenomenon and was able to share thoughts with a current classmate, Dannie Schwarz. In my discussion with Dannie, we were both fascinated by the amount of pressure that can hold when we are working with other people. Dannie expanded further on this by sharing that she had agreed with me in that it is not something we actively think about and expanded further into how this topic bleeds over into areas outside of advising students (personal communication, September 4, 2021). We

explored further how this idea is not something that we think of a lot but is very prevalent in day-to-day life within family, friends, and co-worker relations and interactions. Knowing this idea of influence is a strong power, there is extra work on our parts, as student affairs professionals, and as advisors, to be aware of what influence we are emanating and whether students are making decisions based on their own accord, or if we let our influence decide for them. There is known to allow a bit of influence through, as we have experience and knowledge, but being able to sort through and allowing the right amount of influence through, with the proper transmission of knowledge, is a practice that will be something to refine over time.

Expanding on why I believe taking into consideration their identities the students hold, an idea that was brought up by one of my colleagues in class, Tessa Yarov, was trying to gather how a guest speaker manages where a difference comes up in a student's life where they struggle between a major they want to pursue versus what their familial and cultural ideals persist in their minds (personal communication, September 27, 2021). Tessa wanted to find out what language can be used to navigate struggles with this situation when culture and tradition oppose desires and wants. The guest speaker, Frank Lin, of UC San Diego shared his insight with this situation by advertising a workshop that he helps put on to discuss language in advising situations, but also goes further in saying that the students should engage in a conversation with their families about what the families thoughts are of success, and what success is defined as for the family from a cultural or traditional standpoint. Then have the student expand into how what they want to do can connect to the culture or traditions and sharing those connections in terms of success. Maybe the actual career isn't what was intended, but the work that is done in the career equates to a level of success as perpetuated by the culture or traditions.

Finally, I want to expand on how I see myself engaging in advising praxis with students in my current and future roles. Since the beginning of this class, and more broadly, this program, I find myself actively validating student's experiences. Having gone through some struggles and experiences myself, I feel like being able to just recognize, validate, and in some cases, celebrate student's experiences, gives more power to the student. In my sessions where I am advising students, I plan to be more engaging with helping them feel like they are in the right space, by pushing for them to realize that they are who they are, and their experiences are exactly as they experience them. Even if the story or situation is not to be intended a specific way, the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions are how things are received, and those are what are the most important when looking at developing individuals. I plan to continue to make sure that students understand that what they have experienced, and what they will experience is true to them and that how they proceed with that information is what I would do to help them process. Providing information and cultivating ideas, helps the student make the most informed decision and plan, and gives them the power to take that and run with it. Remembering to stay grounded in the theories and personal knowledge, will help guide me through these advising sessions in helping the students become better versions of themselves.

References

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