

# Five Rules of Advising

1. **Provide accurate information.** Get to know degree requirements, campus policies, and scheduling procedures. This is arguably the most important advisor responsibility.
2. **Don't make decisions for your advisee.**
3. **Be a good listener.**
  - a. Do not interrupt advisees' sentences. Let the story be told.
  - b. Establish good eye contact.
  - c. Use affirmative head-nods and appropriate facial expressions.
  - d. Intermittently respond to advisees with "uh, huh" or "I see."
  - e. Recognize the behavior of advisees and not just words that are said.
  - f. Discover many personality characteristics, such as likes, dislikes, motivations, and values of advisees by simply listening to them talk.
  - g. Paraphrase what advisees say
4. **Make Effective Referrals.**

The following tips from Roundy (1992) are helpful when developing your referral skills:

1. Inform yourself of campus resources thoroughly, paying particular attention to the names of contact people and the chain of command in various offices. Eventually, you will develop an invaluable sense of which people in each area are most helpful and responsive.
2. Keep a list of names, offices, and telephone numbers at hand for quick reference.
3. When talking with students, pay particular attention to their expressed and implied needs. Often students won't ask to be referred for help, but they very much need referral. For example, they may express anxiety about their financial affairs without asking for assistance; a referral to Student Financial Aid may be necessary if you probe further.
4. Do your best to find the right referral. Students may sometimes focus their concerns in an area that is less crucial to their needs than another. For example, students may express anxiety about whether the registrar will let them withdraw from a class late in the term. The appropriate referral, however, is to the instructor of the course, whose prerogative it is to decide whether a withdrawal can be avoided.
5. Students are often uneasy about following through with a referral. Try to make them comfortable with the idea, pointing out the friendliness, accessibility, and helpfulness of the people to whom you are sending them. This task can be crucial in the case of faculty and upper-level administration referrals, since students often find these people intimidating.
6. Try to keep the chain of referrals as simple as possible. Often students will have to visit several offices to complete referral procedures. Help students find ways to reduce steps. Also, work out with students a proper sequence of steps so that they do not have to backtrack to accomplish their ends.

7. Help students draw up agendas for referrals. Have them jot down (or jot down for them) crucial questions and procedures for getting the most out of their visits with the people to whom you send them. Make notes about referrals, indicating what the referral was intended to accomplish so that you can refresh yourself for future interviews.
8. Facilitate referrals by telephoning the parties to whom you are sending students while those students are with you. Telephoning can be helpful in two ways: it can help you to be sure that you are sending students to the right people, and it can give you the opportunity to make an appointment for the students, which will dramatically improve the contact rate for referrals. In fact, a good strategy for referrals is to make telephone calls and then hand the receiver to your students, encouraging them to set up appointments themselves.
9. When you make referrals, jot down notes your advising files that will remind you to ask students on their next visit about the results of their contacts. If students report that they haven't followed through, find out why not and discuss the reasons. See if you should make a different referral, or if you need to become more involved in ensuring contact. However, do not take the process over from your students. It is their responsibility to see that their needs are met.
10. Check your records every so often to get a sense of the referrals you have made. Student development is an ongoing process, and patterns of need and growth can be observed in the sequence of referrals you have made.

## **5. Be Nice.**