Advising Philosophy

My advising philosophy is to **educate with purpose:** to constantly foster learning from colleagues, leaders, students, and experiences, establish support, development and advocacy to create opportunities and collaboration between underrepresented communities to aid in the nourishment and success of these underrepresented communities.

As a first-generation student, I did not know how or what questions to ask when navigating through my academics. Although it was not a requirement for me to meet with my academic advisor as an undergraduate student, I now know the importance of consistent advising and its significance in understanding all requirements needed to graduate. I relied on peers, mentors, and my own navigational skills which prolonged my time to graduation. Providing context to help me understand the "why" to certain requirements was key in planning my terms. As Marc Lowenstein referenced in his "If Advising is Teaching, What Do Advisors Teach" piece, "context *logic* refers to a logical structure that is sometimes reflected in a course outline but not always kept in the students' view throughout the course." In sessions with students, I try to provide reasoning behind needing certain classes completed before taking the next course. Understanding that certain classes build upon each other helps students understand prerequisites and leads them to be able to build their own plan for graduation.

Consequently, as Chickering and Reisser explained in their Educational Identity Vectors (1993), once students develop their competence, in understanding curriculum, they can move through managing emotions of self-doubt or fear centered on imposter syndrome, to then moving through autonomy towards interdependence to make their own decisions and lasting relationships with faculty or staff to help when they move on to either graduate school or job

searches. If a student has a sense of purpose in what they are studying, they then feel more

motivated to continue and have more set and secured academic, personal, and professional goals.

Dr. Aaron Hughey, professor and program coordinator in the department of counseling

and student affairs at Western Kentucky University led a presentation on retention and keeping

students on track to graduation (2021) in which he emphasized the impact that outside factors

have on student retention. This concept outlined in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954), helps

us understand how together with Chickering and Reisser's Educational Identity Vectors (1993),

student needs must be met for students to find purpose or meaning in their academics. For

example, in advising sessions if a student mentions that they are not doing well or might want to

withdraw from a class, we have deeper conversations that might lead to referring students to key

resource spaces. It is important to validate (Rendon, 1994) the student's experiences and help

them come to a resolution on their own. It is an academic advisor's duty to provide those

resources to them so they can take back their autonomy and responsibility on their academic

choices.

Finally, I try to emulate support that was provided to me as an undergraduate student

when advising students. The theory of Marginality and Mattering (Schlossberg, 1989), has

helped in understanding the importance of students having sense of belonging, especially first-

generation students. Through dedicated support in advising, mentoring programs, and more

resources we can help students through their time with us. We partner with career counselors,

resource centers, faculty, among others because having strong connections with key groups

allows us to better help students. Being one of the people that can help students learn about

opportunities for their growth is critical in them knowing and understanding how these resources

can and will elevate their student experience to then help them reach their academic, personal,

and professional goals. We are merely a guide to help students understand their purpose so they can take charge of their path to success.