

Personal Statement and Advising Philosophy

I started my undergraduate career at a four-year institution, a thousand miles away from home, living on campus and as a nursing major. Two years into my major I came to the realization that nursing did not suite my strengths. Luckily, I had taken a GE, "Introduction to Sociology" and excelled as well as enjoyed my experience in that course. Previous to college I had never heard of the term sociology and definitely did not know that it could be a major. I decided to change my major to sociology and minor in psychology. Many times throughout college I doubted that I would obtain my degree from the institution I was attending, whether it was finances or failing a course, obstacles were present. My senior year I was working on campus and surrounded by staff members who were working on their master's degrees. I never thought about a master's program as a possibility for me but rubbing shoulders with others who were actively engaged in their higher education goals sparked a sense of curiosity in me. Again, I decided upon an education program that I had no previous knowledge of but one that intrigued me and I began taking courses for the College Counseling and Student Development degree. My college experience lead me to finish my bachelor's degree and to my surprise my master's degree. My education journey has shaped my whole being, what I know, where I work, and what I do all came out of failing, exploring, and persevering through college. My journey was not perfect or easy but I can whole heartedly say it was worth it. My passion is to help others navigate through the formative and life changing years of college.

I believe that college students are actively making decisions that will impact their entire life. Students are being exposed to a wide array of new, challenging, and exciting experiences as they journey through college. The skills and beliefs gained in college will translate to the workforce and throughout a lifetime. I want to model self-worth, persistence, and integrity so that students will not only succeed academically but socially and cognitively. Within higher education "the opportunities are endless and the challenges are many (Reynolds, 2009)". I aspire to be an advisor that encourages students to reach their goals, no matter the obstacle.

Shared Communication: Advising draws on information from all areas of the university and requires a robust knowledge of changing policies and degree requirements. Advising is the pursuit of knowledge by both the advisor and advisee. One of my main goals of academic advising is to give my advisees accurate and well communicated information and resources. In order for shared communication to work effectively I encourage the advisee to be honest and transparent about where they are, where they want to go, and what obstacles they are facing in their college journey so that I can provide the most

helpful information. I work hard to create a welcoming environment where mutual respect and honest conversations are the daily norm. My goal for shared communication is to see my advisees make positive and educated decisions for their academic career.

Challenge and Support: Sanford's Challenge and Support theory finds that development does not occur without challenge but too much challenge without support does not yield progress (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn, 2010). Advising is challenging and requires time, dedication and resourcefulness from both the advisor and advisee. One of the most important opportunities advisors have to create lasting change is to challenge and support advisees to think differently and in more complex ways about their experiences and goals. Instead of merely telling the advisee what to do, I want to share with students their options and have them critically think about what would work best given their current situation. This individual process of challenge and support develops lifelong skills of assuming responsibility, thinking critically, having a realistic self-appraisal and developing growth mindset habits.

Professional Competence: The ACPA put out a Statement of Ethical Principles and Standards in 2006, the four principles and standards mentioned are, "professional responsibility and competence, student learning and development, responsibility to the institution, and responsibility to society (Reynolds, 2009)". These four standards encompass what I think it means to be a successful and influential advisor. I hope to always be individually and collectively increasing in these four areas. Being up-to-date and engaged with advising best practices and research is a vital part of being a competent advisor. I am committed to staying current on the latest trends and ideas surrounding academic advising by attending conferences such as the California Collaborative Advising and Counseling Conference and being a member of NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advisors.

A college degree is a huge accomplishment and I hope that my approach to academic advising will leave my advisees feeling confident and knowledgeable about their degree and how to achieve it.

References

Evans, N. J., Forney, D.S., Guido, M. F., Patton, D. L., Renn, A. K. (2010). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Reynolds, A.L. (2009). *Helping college students: Developing essential support skills for student affairs practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.