Basic, But Key, Questions to Ask Advisees About Their Board Prep

As we head into the board prep season there are few things that we should remember to be on the lookout for and things we should be sure to ask our advisees.

Remember to ask:
◇ When do they plan on taking their board exam(s)?
◇ Have they finalized a study plan?
  ◇ Is it realistic?
  ◇ Are they using First Aid and Question Banks?
  ◇ Are they using a Board Prep program such as DIT?
  ◇ Encourage them to incorporate a “catch day” that functions as a day to do the things you couldn’t get to from previous days. This will help alleviate some of the stress of feeling as though they “MUST” do everything on their schedule that day! Thus, the “catch day” is a day to get caught up or a day to recharge their batteries if they are caught up.
◇ Do they know about all of the VCOM resources available to them?
◇ What are they doing to stay balanced?
  ◇ Are they eating healthy, sleeping, and exercising?
When talking to your advisees be mindful of how students appear. What is their non-verbal communication telling you? Be on the lookout for students who may appear overly stressed, anxious, or are very hesitant in their thought process or speech.

Remember, when needed, refer or strongly recommend that students see their Director of Academic and Counseling Services (Dr. Magalhaes on the Virginia Campus and Dr. Fadel on the Carolinas Campus).

Good Resources for Academic Advisors
◇ The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA) - [www.nacada.ksu.edu/](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/)
◇ The Mentor: An Academic Advising Journal - [http://dus.psu.edu/mentor/](http://dus.psu.edu/mentor/)
◇ Good Advice Website - [www.academic-advising.com/](http://www.academic-advising.com/)

Advising students to be active learners?
Help show them the way by varying the teaching and learning strategies in your course.
Not sure how?
Schedule a meeting so we can help you explore the possibilities!

Want More Information - Contact Us!

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How to Support the Struggling Student

While each provided a faculty development session with the same title, Drs. Mahaney and Paulman approached the topic from different viewpoints but with very similar advice.

Tips From Dr. Paulman

Dr. Paulman’s faculty development session focused on supporting academically struggling students from the course instructor/course director/chair point of view. Supporting these students begins by analyzing your exam data to determine who needs additional support. He points out that all students who fail an exam (regardless of their GPA) need you to intervene. From this first exam and your discussions with the student you can then more specifically narrow in on the students who are truly at-risk. In meetings with students he recommends that you look for: patterns (either in content deficit or study habits), other factors that could contribute to their academic difficulties, learning styles, time management issues, and ineffective study techniques. Finally, help the student develop a plan of action and refer the student to other support if needed.

Take Home Points

1. Course Directors/Chairs MUST be proactive in keeping track of all students in their courses.
2. Students WILL resist assistance.
3. Every action MUST be centered around the student.
4. Learn to recognize when other issues are in play.
5. Follow-up is critical.
6. THIS TAKES TIME!!!

Tips From Dr. Mahaney

Dr. Mahaney’s faculty development focused on supporting academically struggling students from the academic advisor point of view. His presentation began by helping us understand that students might be identified as being at-risk for many different reasons and that we have many different ways to identify and track those students. He identifies that there are often roadblocks preventing meaningful conversation with these students which include student: fear, denial, avoidance, and refusal. Use Dr. Mahaney’s take home tips below as strategies to overcome these roadblocks. He also shares some of the more common problems students report and gives us ideas to share with students that address these problems.

Take Home Points

1. The critical ingredient needed to help students develop effective strategies to improve their performance is the relationship you have with them.
2. The student and the faculty member must be engaged in the process.
3. Reach out.
4. Be upfront with them about your concerns and your goals for them.
5. Provide assurance.
7. Be student-centered.
8. Offer accountability and follow-up.

Dr. Mahaney’s presentation can be viewed on VCOMTV (Post Graduate and CME site). Identifier #8724. (due to technical difficulties Dr. Paulman’ presentation is unavailable at this time)

Quick Tip

Do you find yourself asking,

“When did I last meet with that advisee?”
“What did we discuss?”
“What was our final plan of action?”

If so, you’re not alone! As a faculty member and an academic advisor you are exposed to hundreds of students a year and it’s hard to keep track of the specifics of every conversation. However, keeping track of these details is key to your effectiveness as an advisor. If you are looking for a better way to keep track of this information, try keeping a communication log. At a minimum the log should include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Plan of Action</th>
<th>Follow-up Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| John Smith | 1/21/15         | Listening to all lectures on VCOMTV after class - requires a lot of time and not effective. | • Develop more effective note-taking method for use in class  
• Limit VCOMTV to sections of lecture not understood | 2/4/15         |

Entering these details into your spreadsheet as soon as the student leaves your office takes only a few minutes. Follow that by taking a few seconds to put a reminder on your calendar so that as time goes by you don’t forget to “check in” with your advisee.

Faculty and Staff Development Sessions

© Wednesday, February 11
* Meaningful Use: Medicare and Medicaid
© Tuesday, February 17
* Hey, Do You Have a Minute? How to Help the Challenging Student
© Thursday, February 19
* Genetics in Primary Care
© Thursday, February 23
* An Introduction to APCA’s Aesthetics and Laser Services
© 1st and 3rd Wednesday of Every Month
* Microsoft Office Mini Workshop
© Friday, February 27
* VCOM’s Annual Research Recognition Day

If you have a faculty/staff development session you would like to suggest, please contact Debbie Bourne or La’Toya Thomas-Dixon.

Available in the VCOM Library

Academic Advising Approaches: Strategies That Teach Students to Make the Most of College

“This chapter, like this book, begins from the simple premise that students’ choices and behaviors in college matter to their success and that through careful attention to their own practices, advisors can help create the conditions necessary for students to achieve success.”

The book includes the work of 22 authors, each with years of experience in higher education and academic advising. The authors provide a wonderful overview of the foundations and history of developmental advising and provide the reader with academic advising approaches derived from the social sciences and other discipline-based theories. This design allows the reader to develop an approach to academic advising that best fits their personal/professional beliefs related to academics and motivational factors.