

DRAFT STATEMENT ON ADVISING AND LEARNING GOALS FOR FIRST-YEAR ACADEMIC ADVISING

Strategic Planning Implementation Committee on Advising

GENERAL EDUCATION ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advising is a form of teaching that is integral to successful learning outcomes for Oberlin Arts & Sciences and Conservatory students. It encompasses practices of mentoring and coaching in the formal and informal interplay between advisors and advisees. Advising should take place in a variety of settings and should be ongoing and regular.

The primary function of academic advising is to assist students in planning, assessing and reflecting on their undergraduate education and their educational goals. Academic advising as a form of teaching facilitates academic, personal, social, and professional growth and is informed by current developmental and learning-oriented scholarship on advising. Thus, while academic advising requires conveying prescriptive/transactional information, it should further the development of the students' agency as intentional learners.

Effective academic advising entails developing meaningful relationship with advisees and understanding Oberlin's curriculum, learning goals, support resources, and academic regulations. Advisors should be proactive in directing students to academic, personal and professional resources on campus and vigilant in addressing any barriers to effective student access to these resources.

FIRST-YEAR ACADEMIC ADVISING

First-year academic advising should be designed around a set of intended learning goals that are tailored to each student. The overarching objective of first-year advising is to facilitate students' intellectual, personal, and social development and to cultivate their critical thinking and goal setting skills. As intentional learners, first-year students should be actively developing the capacities to explore effectively (1) what they bring to Oberlin (2) what they want to learn at Oberlin – and why – and (3) how to make best educational use of their curricular and co-curricular opportunities toward that end.

In collaboration with Oberlin's A&PS advising professionals, the role of first-year academic advisors to support their advisees in making significant progress on learning goals in several areas: they should develop skills to successfully navigate the rigors of college life; they should acclimate to college learning; they should actively create a thoughtful educational pathway for themselves; and they should engage institutional resources that support educational, personal, social, and career-related development. These learning goals should be clearly understood by advisors and advisees.

Students need to take personal responsibility for realizing these learning goals essential for their success as intentional learners. In order to make thoughtful decisions about their curricular and co-curricular choices, students need to understand the academic curriculum and its relationship to Oberlin's academic learning goals and their particular path toward realizing those goals. Advisors should help students understand and assess their academic progress and support students in making connections among their academic, personal, social, and professional experiences.

LEARNING GOALS FOR FIRST-YEAR ACADEMIC ADVISING

These goals function as the shared expectations for the academic advising experience that should inform the design of the advising system, the practice of both advisors and advisees, and Administrative and Professional Staff (A&PS) support for academic advising. The goals will be realized through efficient advising mechanisms that are sensitive to faculty and staff workload and have been successfully implemented at peer institutions.

During their first-year students should:

1. Create an Educational Pathway that Connects Past and Present Experiences to Goals for the Future

- a. Students will understand the purpose of academic advising as a fundamental educational activity for self-exploration, questioning, discernment, assessment and development.
- b. Students will develop the necessary competencies to create their personalized educational pathway that also makes Oberlin a better place. This is an ongoing process of reflection that draws from their past and present, and anticipates their future curricular and co-curricular paths and long-term personal and professional interests and aspirations.

2. Acclimate to College Learning

- a. Students will appreciate the reasons for the norms of academic and interpersonal integrity that guide Oberlin's practices as a community of learning.
- b. Students will understand the College's learning goals for the Arts & Sciences and/or the Conservatory. Students will think through the range of options they have for realizing these learning goals and begin to explore the curriculum.

3. Engage Skills to Use Institutional Resources for Holistic Support

- a. Students will form relationships with the range of educational, personal, social, and career-related support staff available to them and understand how to engage them effectively and in a timely manner.
- b. Students will acquire knowledge of, and develop skills in, using available technologies that support holistic advising.

4. Navigate College Life

- a. Students will understand the Oberlin's academic policies and how these policies relate to their progression toward their undergraduate degree.
- b. Students will develop skills and habits of studying, time management, prioritizing, and wellness essential for thriving at college level in the rigorous educational environment of a residential campus.