



NACADA
THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY
FOR ACADEMIC ADVISING

ADVISING IS FOREVER:

Sharing Stories to Ignite
(or Reignite) Your Advising Spirit

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No matter how much experience advisors have, and regardless of how educated we are, we can and *should* always be learning. Sustained and enriching mentorship is one of the most powerful ways to do so, and for me, I am very thankful to Dr. Clifton for sharing his time, experiences, and his perspectives with me over the last decade. Thank you, Dr. Clifton, and all the other mentors who mentor us, as advisors, to be the best we can be for our students and for our profession.

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Excellence in Advising Mentorship

Jill Hartmann, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, United States



I was 48 years old when the UGA Exploratory Center hired me as a business advisor. I had no prior experience in academic advising, so I was scared to death of failing on the job. Therefore, I was grateful when my lead advisor, Will*, told me that it takes time to master advising and to give myself that space to learn from my experience.

Initially, I met with senior advisors to learn about our student information systems and observed their advising appointments for several hours each day. I learned how to advise from watching my colleagues in action. After the first month, I began leading their student appointments under my colleagues' supervision. My first time I was overeager, and my mentor, Jackie*, had to take over after only five minutes, but she reassured me that she had made similar mistakes when she first started advising five years earlier. She told me, "You are going to be a great advisor."

Eventually, I started advising my own students for spring semester orientation. Will and several of my colleagues encouraged me to have trust in myself and my training.

They reassured me that I was prepared and that if I needed anything, to send a message to one of the other advisors, or come knock on their doors, even if the doors were closed.

I advised four students back-to-back that first day. At the end of the day, Jackie walked across the hall, knocked on my door, and asked me, "How did it go your first day?" When I told Jackie that I felt like I had done a good job, she answered, "I told you. You are going to be a great advisor." I thanked Jackie for believing in me. Before I left work that day, everyone on my team, including Will and my supervisor, Jennifer*, congratulated me on a job well done.

Soon afterward, the pandemic hit, and our entire office moved to full telework. For the next 16 months, I advised students remotely. All of us on the team were now facing the unknown territory of virtual academic advising.

Throughout the next several months, all of the advisors on the team supported each other in every respect. My lead advisor and my direct supervisor always had our backs whenever a situation arose where we needed their support. When I have made mistakes, Jennifer and Will have given me the space to reflect upon and learn from them. When I made a difference in a student's life, they told me that my students are lucky to have me as their advisor.

Will went out of his way to encourage me to take advantage of as many professional development courses as possible. Both he and Jennifer allowed me to take time out of my schedule to attend training and development classes at UGA. They also supported my requests to take NACADA e-tutorial courses and attend conferences. Will specifically told me many times that he supported my pursuit of every opportunity to learn and grow in the profession.

If it had not been for the excellent training I received, I would not have been ready to take on remote advising during the pandemic.

The differences I have made in the lives of my students were possible because of the supportive mentors on my team. I will always be grateful to the dedicated and cohesive group of advisors in the UGA Exploratory Center for their guidance and encouragement.

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CHAPTER 2. WHAT WE LEARN FROM OTHERS

"It is such an important reminder that every conversation we have with another human being has the potential to literally change the course of their life."

~ Jenny Bloom, Florida Atlantic University

As academic advising professionals, we want to positively impact our students, but whether we realize it or not, we also impact, and are impacted by, our advising colleagues. The work we produce, how we make others feel through our interactions, and the commitments we keep even when our circumstances have changed are all visible, even if no one publicly states it.

In this chapter, we explore stories of how one conversation or experience has led to lasting relationships, innovative ideas, and reflections on the unique strengths one brings.