Chapter 8
Effective Student-Advisor Engagement and Relationship Building in Online Graduate Programs

Jennifer Varney
Southern New Hampshire University, USA

ABSTRACT

The goal of this chapter is to discuss the importance of advisor-student engagement as a critical component of student success. Much has been written about advising undergraduate students and strategies for working with first generation students and other challenges specific to undergraduate students, and this chapter will focus on working with online graduate students. Heisserer and Parette noted that contact with a significant person within an institution of higher education is a crucial factor in a student’s decision to remain in college. The focus on this chapter is on how advisors can be the significant person within the institution for their graduate students, and how advisors can help students successfully integrate into the institution academically and socially to increase their likelihood of retention and success.

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about advising undergraduate students, first generation students and underprepared college freshmen. A student population that is often overlooked in the online, graduate student. Although graduate students have higher education experience, it is likely that this experience is not current and not online. In many
Effective Student-Advisor Engagement and Relationship Building in Online Graduate Programs

ways, advising online graduate students is not significantly different from working with undergraduate online students, yet there are some nuances that this population requires. Heisserer and Parette, (2002), noted that contact with a significant person within an institution of higher education is a crucial factor in a student’s decision to remain in college. The focus of this chapter is on how advisors can be the significant person within the institution for their graduate students, and how advisors can help students successfully integrate into the institution academically and socially, in order to increase their likelihood of retention and success (Tinto, 1975).

Academic Advising

It is important to begin the discussion about building advising relationships with online graduate students with a definition of academic advising. According to The Global Association for Academic Advising (NACADA), academic advising is:

Academic advising is integral to fulfilling the teaching and learning mission of higher education. Through academic advising, students learn to become members of their higher education community, to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students, and to prepare to be educated citizens of a democratic society and a global community. Academic advising engages students beyond their own worldviews, while acknowledging their individual characteristics, values, and motivations as they enter, move through, and exit the institution. Regardless of the diversity of our institutions, our students, our advisors, and our organizational structures, academic advising has three components: curriculum (what advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising does what it does), and student learning outcomes (the result of academic advising). (NACADA, 2006)

As the definition suggests, academic advising has evolved from being limited to course selection and institutional forms, to a holistic support system for all students and all situations. Often, advisors are the only structured activity on campus in which all students have the opportunity for ongoing, one-on-one interaction with a concerned representation of the institution, and because of their central role with all students, advisors and advising activities are integral to student retention and persistence, (Habley, 1994, Tinto, 1999, 2016). In addition, Crisp, (2010) observed a positive association between one’s advising experience and his or her grade-point average (GPA), classroom performance, ability to think critically, persistence, future aspirations, and confidence to succeed academically.

There are many models of academic advising, including professional advisors, faculty advisors, advisors located on campus and advisors working remotely, and all models may be equally effective. The key to effective advising is not necessarily
14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/effective-student-advisor-engagement-and-relationship-building-in-online-graduate-programs/220571?camid=4v1


www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=92

Related Content

Teaching Creative Problem Solving in Engineering Education

www.igi-global.com/chapter/teaching-creative-problem-solving-in-engineering-education/166476?camid=4v1a

The Impact of Universities on Regional Competitiveness: A Review of the Main Theoretical and Methodological Approaches
Aurora Amélia Castro Teixeira, Ana Oliveira, Ana Dias Daniel, Miguel Torres Preto, Gonçalo Rodrigues Brás and Carlos Rodrigues (2020). Examining the Role of Entrepreneurial Universities in Regional Development (pp. 67-92).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-impact-of-universities-on-regional-competitiveness/238504?camid=4v1a
Exploring the Experiences of International Students’ Partners: Implications for the Post-Secondary Context
Jon Woodend, Sarah Nutter, Danni Lei and Sharon Cairns (2016). Exploring the Social and Academic Experiences of International Students in Higher Education Institutions (pp. 96-114).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/exploring-the-experiences-of-international-students-partners/146767?camid=4v1a

Creating an Environment That Supports Online Faculty Engagement at All Levels
www.igi-global.com/chapter/creating-an-environment-that-supports-online-faculty-engagement-at-all-levels/220574?camid=4v1a