

# Introduction

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Perhaps in an effort to lessen concerns about the challenges in advising, the myth is often propagated that as long as one cares about students, has some basic information, and knows available resources anyone can be a good advisor. In reality, effective advising is challenging and requires more than academic intelligence, a kind disposition and good intentions. Quality advising demands a unique set of knowledge and skills that, for many advisors, must be developed.

Advising is more than just scheduling classes. Effective advising is a teaching-learning process built upon a partnership in which the advisor and student have mutual responsibilities which contribute to the desired outcomes. Just like the masterful dance, advising is dynamic and involves qualities like rhythm, flow, and direction, and the music of the dance is unique to each context. In advising, each person has a role to perform and must move in sync with his/her partner.

As any two-left-footed person knows, mastering the steps is essential to enjoying the dance. All individuals engaged in academic advising are expected to demonstrate the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that contribute to excellence in advising. Even for faculty who are committed to their role as advisor, finding the time to achieve excellence in advising can be difficult.

This **Advisor Handbook** is ideal for faculty just beginning their advising responsibilities and experienced advisors who desire to enhance their skills. It is designed to be a handy resource to assist faculty advisors at Shippensburg to effectively engage and thrive in the advising process.

The *Handbook* is organized to highlight four key areas essential to achieve excellence in academic advising:

***Rather than protest that advising is an unimportant extracurricular duty, effective advisors know that advising is at the heart of who they are as educators. They prepare for advising as seriously as they prepare for teaching. They know that few of their other responsibilities carry as much potential to contribute to the success of the university and its students as advising.***

- —those things that an advisor must understand about the role of academic advising, SHIP's advising program and the students they serve.
- —those things that an advisor needs to know to provide accurate information to students. These include institutional policies and procedures, program requirements, use of resources, and various "how-to" guides.
- —those skills and attitudes advisors need to use to establish and maintain the advising relationship, to engage students in goal-setting, and to assist students in decision-making.
- —resources and strategies advisors can use for self-assessment and professional development

The Advisor Development and Resource Team members hope that you find this *Handbook* a useful tool. It should be used in conjunction with the University catalog, the *Swataney*, the *Guidebook for Undergraduate Students*, and the Advising website. Please view the *Handbook* from a user's perspective, and let me know if you have suggestions on how it can be improved.

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