

Ethical Principles for Advising

1. Seek the best possible education for the advisee.

It is not always easy to judge what will be the best education; our obligation is to do our best with the information available. Therefore, careful listening is essential. This will benefit students, people with whom they will later have contact, and society as a whole.

2. Treat students equitably; don't play favorites or create special privileges.

Treating students equitably does not mean treating them all the same. Differences in students' needs require us to spend more time with one than with another and to advise one more intrusively than another. But the fact that we might like one student more or that we might share another's values does not justify differential treatment.

3. Enhance the advisee's ability to make decisions.

This goal cannot be accomplished without permitting the advisee to make decisions. It benefits the students and others in the long run because it supports and develops individual autonomy. Part of being an effective advisor is helping students learn how to be responsible for their own life planning. Advisors advise-students decide.

4. Advocate for the advisee with other offices.

Students might not get all the services from the college without a little help. There is such a thing, however, as advocating too hard.

5. Be truthful.

Tell the advisee the truth about college policies and procedures, and tell others (faculty, staff, administrators, etc.) the truth as well, but respect the confidentiality of interactions with the advisee.

6. Support the institution's educational philosophy and its policies.

7. Maintain the credibility of the advising program.

8. Accord colleagues appropriate professional courtesy and respect.

Professional behavior is not only about being polite and respectful to people. It is also a prohibition against encouraging students to believe negative things about the competence or character of colleagues. Criticizing or complaining about other faculty or staff to students is both unprofessional and inappropriate.

9. Confidentiality

Do not betray confidential information. The Federal Privacy Act or (FERPA), prevents faculty from discussing student records and private information with parents or others unless students have signed a release giving permission to do so.

(Marc Lowenstein & Thomas J. Grites, NACADA Journal, Vol. 13 (1), Spring 1993)