

# Faculty Academic Advising: A Dynamic, Multidimensional Process

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New faculty advisors express diverse and complex attitudes and perceptions toward academic advising as shaped by the individual's appreciation of quality advising, expectations for advisors, and the advisor's level of confidence to succeed in the role. These attitudes and perceptions are typically formulated during the faculty member's first-year experiences as an advisor. Therefore, new faculty advisors must develop a positive understanding of the role that faculty members fill as academic advisors.

Many faculty members cannot devote themselves full-time to the art of advising as do other campus advisors at McNeese. Instead, their advising duties are one of the multiple complex responsibilities they must manage. New faculty advisors with instructional responsibilities often feel overwhelmed by institutional demands to demonstrate excellence in teaching, conducting scholarship, performing service, and managing sizeable advising caseloads. In addition, they face expectations to keep students and parents happy such that undergraduates continue flowing through the pipeline from enrollment to graduation. Most new faculty members desire to excel in each of their areas of responsibility and are confident that their academic preparations have adequately equipped them for their instructional and research duties. However, many lack previous knowledge or experience as academic advisors and struggle with feelings of uncertainty about their competency in this new role. Their levels of anxiety may also be heightened by misperceptions of the expectations for new faculty advisors.

Several popular myths about the nature of advising and the role of faculty advisors, if embraced, can heighten the levels of concern and frustration experienced by new faculty advisors. The primary falsehood suggests advising is easy— that anyone who cares about students and can impart some basic information can be a good advisor. In reality, quality advising requires more than a kind disposition and good intentions.

Some institutions promote a similar myth: Because faculty members can teach, they can advise. Faculty members, as educators, often readily value those elements of advising that embody essential components of quality teaching, but they must recognize that quality academic advising is a dynamic, multidimensional process that demands the development of a unique set of knowledge and skills.

To lessen any unfounded concerns and to better understand the nature of advising, new faculty advisors may benefit from learning about the ideas and history that undergird modern academic advising. One quickly ascertains that quality faculty academic advising is a dynamic, multidimensional process informed by several relevant theories. In fact, no single theory drives advising best practices. Instead, effective academic advisors incorporate an array of theories borrowed from the social sciences, education, humanities, and student and career development. To gain a richer appreciation for the field of academic advising and the role of faculty advisors, all advisors can and should gain familiarity with the multiple theories that inform the practice of advising—a rather daunting challenge that cannot possibly be accomplished in an advisor's first year.

We recommend that new faculty advisors begin by adopting a first-year learning goal of attaining an understanding that places advising into a meaningful context—**advising as teaching**. This paradigm focuses on educational processes and students. Within this paradigm, rather than viewing advising as an unwelcomed add-on to a faculty member's heavy load of responsibilities, effective faculty advisors appreciate *advising as a key component of the teaching-learning interaction*. In their advising-as-teaching roles, faculty members do not merely serve as on-call information booths; they recognize that effective advising involves more than imparting information on course curriculum and registration issues. They esteem the value of quality academic advising in empowering students to

assume ownership of their educational experiences.

Next Steps? > Continue by reading the next article in this toolkit - [Components of Quality Academic Advising](#). Or go back and review the previous article [The Unique Role of Faculty in Academic Advising](#).

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