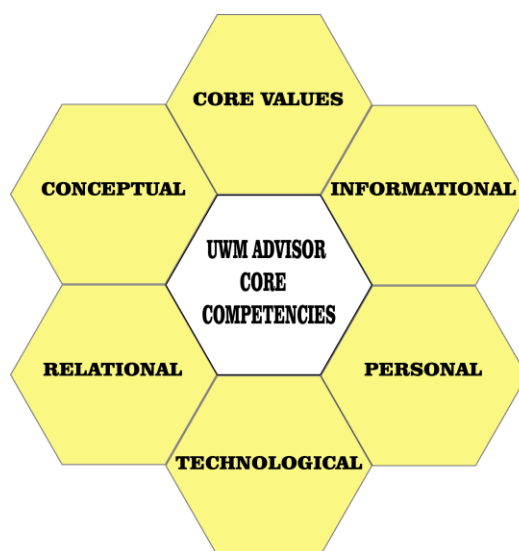


University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM)

Academic Advisor Core Competencies



Purpose

The Enhancing Advising (EA) committee of the Advisors and Counselors Network (ACN) at UWM created a hexagonal model for understanding advisor competencies and the interconnectedness between them. It serves as a framework for new advisor training and campus wide professional development. EA's goal is that each advisor invests in the Core Competencies to guide professional practice and fulfill their responsibilities to students, colleagues, the institution, society, and themselves.

According to Kuhn (2008), academic advising takes place in "situations in which an institutional representative gives insight or direction to a college student about an academic, social, or personal matter. The nature of this direction might be to inform, suggest, counsel, discipline, coach, mentor, or even teach."

Per the UW-Milwaukee Advising Mission Statement, successful academic advisors engage in honest and respectful relationships with students that contribute to their retention, achievement, and success. To facilitate excellence and consistency, academic advising professionals adhere to fundamental core competencies established through national research and best practices.

According to the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), core values "affirm the importance of advising within the academy and acknowledge the impact that advising interactions can have on individuals, institutions and society" (NACADA, 2005).

While each advisor arrives at UW-Milwaukee with different levels of knowledge, comfort, and skill in each competency area, it is important advisors have a minimum level of skill in each area at the time of hire. Once hired, it is essential advisors are provided the opportunity to grow and develop in these areas to enhance their ability to provide effective advising. As advisors become experts in individual aspects of the core competencies they will have the opportunity to become mentors or expert instructors facilitating workshops for their peers.

Core Competency Descriptions

CORE VALUES: The NACADA statement of advisor responsibilities serves as the overarching competency lens for the remaining five competency areas. A summary of the NACADA Core Values is that advisors are responsible: 1) to the diverse individuals they advise, 2) for involving others with a holistic approach, 3) to their institution, 4) to higher education standards and best practices, 5) to their educational communities locally and globally, and 6) to their own professional practices and to themselves personally for a balanced life (NACADA 2005).

CONCEPTUAL: Advisors understand and apply student development theories, academic advising theories, current best practices and research as needed for high impact advising. Advisors embrace personal, departmental, and campus academic advising philosophies. Advisors utilize this conceptual knowledge to guide the development of student academic, personal, and life goals throughout their academic journey.

INFORMATIONAL: Advisors understand the policies, processes, and procedures necessary to perform the essential functions of their role. Advisors are knowledgeable of university offerings, services, and resources. Advisors are responsive to the diverse demographics of the university population they serve to effectively assist students in navigating the university and appropriate community resources. Advisors participate in staying abreast of current campus and community issues and trends.

RELATIONAL: Advisors possess essential interpersonal and relational skills required to establish caring relationships with diverse student populations to foster learning and holistic development. Advisors demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills to interact appropriately with students, colleagues, and the university community.

TECHNOLOGICAL: Advisors are comfortable and capable in using a wide range of technology-based programs, and possess an ongoing willingness to learn new skills. Advisors embrace electronic tools to bring high impact practices to campus and enhance the student experience.

PERSONAL: Advisors display self-awareness, self-regulation, reflection, and growth to increase effectiveness. Advisors demonstrate a willingness to learn and engage in critical thinking, with an openness to advising research and best practices. Advisors routinely evaluate their strengths, limitations, and areas for improvement. Advisors seek professional development opportunities on a regular basis to elevate their skills and refine their personal advising philosophy. Advisors utilize their knowledge of self to achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Citations

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