



## **Academic Advising Best Practices**

Academic advising facilitates the student's development as a whole person, addressing academic, professional, and personal goals. Meeting the goals of advising is a shared responsibility between the advisor and student. *This list of recommended best practices was developed in part from existing practices already utilized by individuals Schools and Departments and is intended to serve as a suggested supplement to the college-wide Academic Advising Policy.* Schools and Departments are encouraged to implement some or all of these practices to further enhance academic advising.

### Academic Advising:

TCNJ advising policy and practices align with the standard definition of Academic Advising, taken from *David S. Crockett, Ed. (1987). Advising Skills, Techniques and Resources: A Compilation of Materials Related to the Organization and Delivery of Advising Services. Iowa City, Iowa. ACT Corporation.*

“Academic advising is a developmental process which assists students in the clarification of their life/career goals and in the development of educational plans for the realization of these goals. It is a decision-making process by which students realize their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchanges with an advisor; it is ongoing, multifaceted, and the responsibility of both student and advisor. The advisor serves as a facilitator of communication, a coordinator of learning experiences through courses and career planning and academic progress review, and an agent of referral to other campus agencies as necessary.”

### Suggested Best Practices

#### A. Recommendations for Schools

1. School provides supplemental recommended advising practices tailored to each school's specific needs, provided they do not contradict the core college-wide advising guiding principles and advising contract documents (i.e. an advising syllabus; for an example see <https://academicaffairs.tcnj.edu/files/2016/11/TCNJ-Advising-Resources-Sample-Documents-2016.pdf>)
2. School should implement a system/mechanism for students to report level of satisfaction with advising.

3. Schools should conduct assessment on a regular basis (as defined by the school; see <https://academicaffairs.tcnj.edu/files/2016/11/TCNJ-Advising-Resources-Sample-Documents-2016.pdf>) and use the results to improve advising.
4. External transfer students often require additional, focused advising; thus we recommend that an optional, expanded training course focused specifically on transfer students be created and offered to advisors who work with this population of students. We also suggest that students entering TCNJ in the spring semester should be permitted to take the orientation course in the subsequent fall semester.

## B. Recommendations for Departments

1. Department Chair devotes a portion of one department meeting/semester to discuss advising/registration.
2. Departments should assign a Department Advising Liaison to serve as a point person/ advising resource to faculty in the department. His/her responsibilities will vary by department but could include communicating changes in policy, answering questions about students with special academic circumstances, leading discussion at department meeting devoted to advising. Department Advising Liaison will remind advisors of the directory of campus advising and support services (<https://academicaffairs.tcnj.edu/files/2016/10/Copy-of-TCNJ-Academic-Advising-Resources-2016.pdf>).
3. Department hosts an organized event (“meet and greet”, etc.) within the first month of the fall semester where students can meet with their advisor.
4. Departments are encouraged to use academic hold flags to ensure that advisees meet with their academic advisor.
5. Departments conduct assessment on a regular basis (as defined by the department; see <https://academicaffairs.tcnj.edu/files/2016/11/TCNJ-Advising-Resources-Sample-Documents-2016.pdf>) and use the results to improve advising.
6. Department should encourage advisors to send a welcome/introductory letter to first year students at the end of August, the week before classes begin (once faculty are back on contract). For students who begin in the spring semester, advisors send an e-mail prior to the beginning of the semester in January.