

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Identity-Based Advising

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Topic Overview

We define identity-based advising as a process where academic advisors conduct appointments tailored specifically to the needs of different student identities. We base our current presentation on race, gender, LGBTQ+, athlete, and international student identities, but recognize that all students benefit from collaborating with an advisor they feel most comfortable around.

Literature & Theories

A variety of academic literature was utilized in creating the basis of knowledge behind our presentation. A few of our key references are listed below.

Laughter's (2014) Theory

We base our presentation on Judson Laughter's (2014) notion of "micro-kindness" as a way to promote multicultural engagement and education; although, he does mention this perspective is very theoretical.

Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory

Approaching this topic from a psychological perspective, Tajfel's (1981) theory helped shed light on why students with minoritized identities might not be their authentic selves in group settings.

Museus & Ravello's (2010) Article

Three suggestions emerged from this study; humanized, holistic and proactive academic advising practices contributed to stronger racial and ethnic minority student success.

Why?

Since academic advisors represent one of the few functional units with the unique opportunity to meet and collaborate with the entire undergraduate student population at some point in their academic career; openness, inclusion, and acknowledgement of all identities in appointments can send a critical message to students that their identities are valid, valued, and welcome at UTK. Additionally, students feel comfortable confiding in advisors through different connections made in previous appointments.

Applications to Practice

Advising is a profession in which we are constantly needing to learn new information about theories and practices that drive our profession. Different events affect how students feel in their everyday life on the microcosm that is a university environment.

Our goal is to ensure that advisors are encouraged (potentially required) to attend and engage in diversity and inclusion events and learning opportunities. We propose implementation of programming, such as:

- Literature supporting diversity and equity be made available to the advising community
- Hosting events for the advising community to participate in that educate and inform
 - Sensitivity & cultural competency training
 - Safe Zone training provided by the Pride Center
- Encouraging the ability to use time to attend events, such as the Black Issues Conference, open forums with the Chancellor and Vice Provosts, and other events that provide knowledge of situations on the University of Tennessee campus and elsewhere
- Organizing student panels (volunteers) about their experiences with marginalized identities on campus and suggestions for advisors
- Attendance at, minimally, two pre-approved diversity and inclusion events each semester

References

Laughter, J. (2014). Toward a theory of micro-kindness: Developing positive actions in multicultural education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 16(2), 2-14.

Museus, S., & Ravello, J. (2010). Characteristics of academic advising that contribute to racial and ethnic minority student success at predominantly white institutions. *NACADA Journal*, 30(1), 47-58.

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.