



## ADVISING = VISION<sup>1</sup>

**Seeing · Thinking · Deciding**

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**E-Mail:** [greenchr@berea.edu](mailto:greenchr@berea.edu) (my preferred method)  
**Limits:** I go to bed at 10:00. After I can access your message, it might take me a half-day or more to respond.

Dear Advisee,

I like to start off documents like this with a letter, where I try to explain to you what we're going to be doing. So let me start by offering some thoughts about the verb "to advise." To advise means to offer someone thoughtful suggestions to help that person make decisions about choices and situations. But to advise can also mean to inform or caution. Presidents have advisors but so do friends: advisors are people we trust to help us think things through. That's the role I'm serving for you. I hope that we will come to trust and believe in another, but that kind of relationship takes time and effort.

You are in a new world now: you've left home, and you're going to be faced with a thousand decisions about the paths you want to explore and follow. As your college advisor, it's my job to be there for you, to help you know the resources here on campus, to point the way, to help you think things through, and, yes, to give you permission to sign up for classes. In its most constricted sense, being an academic advisor is like being a guide in a maze, and it's that advisor's job to make sure the advisee is going turning at the right places (i.e., taking the right classes) to make it to the exit called graduation.

But at Berea College, advising is much more than that: in a practical sense it means helping you figure out what this college stuff (and life!) is all about, how it works, and you can thrive here. It is being a guide who knows the ropes, who can help you find information and resources, who can help you learn about what you want to do and find your way, and who can help you process problems and find solutions.

I'm a poet and long term lover of language, so I went and did a bit of digging about the roots of the word "advise" (also called finding its etymology). The root comes from the Anglo-French word "avise" which means "to look at" and consider, so my job as an advisor is to help you see possible paths and help you think about what it means to take them, but you are the one who has to do the choosing and walking. I am your consultant and coach. However, the responsibility is yours. For instance, if you want to climb a mountain, I can help you figure out how to do that and suggest training and resources, but it will be clear to everyone if you decided just to eat twinkies instead!

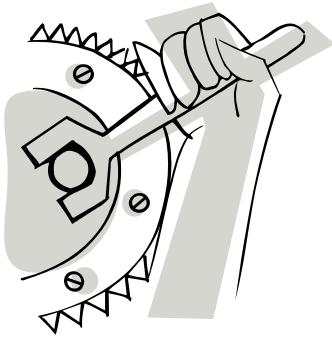
All that said, the best advising is a risky and wonderful business because it means we need to find a space and way to meet and talk. It means you've got to be honest with me (about your goals, confusions, your fears, your hopes), and I have to be worthy of that sharing. I've come to think that being a good advisor is about believing in someone and sticking with them as they figure things out. I look forward to developing that relationship with you, because the work you're going to be doing over the next four years is not just about you, it's about all the good you're going to be doing in our world.

Yours,

Dr. Green

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<sup>1</sup> The word "advise" was first used in the 1400s and came from Anglo-French *avis*, which meant to look at or consider (*vis* = to look, as in vision). *Merriam-Webster*. Web. 23 July 2012.



## The Nuts & Bolts



### Survival Materials

- Three-Ring binder dedicated to keeping records & information about your progress
- Berea College Catalogue (on-line)
- College Advising Web Resources available through the student portal (My Berea)
- Berea College Schedule of Classes

### Learning Outcomes for Advising in your first year (they will change as you progress through your career)

- Explore and explain the structure, requirements, and logic of the General Education program at Berea College.
- Articulate the purpose of a liberal arts degree.
- Become acquainted with and use available resources (such as The Learning Center, Counseling and Disability Services, Career Development, etc.).
- Formulate comprehensive goals (academic, social, leadership, etc.) that will help clarify career choices and allow you to take full advantage of your Berea College education.
- Develop (and refine) comprehensive four-year plan regarding the academic, labor, service, leadership other opportunities to take advantage of during the student's tenure at Berea.
  - This plan may be changed and refined over time, but laying the preliminary groundwork in this way will make major selection and declaration easier and will provide opportunities for taking advantage of important learning opportunities that are available (internships, undergraduate research, term abroad, etc.) and help you stay on track toward graduation.
- Know how to use BoND and other resources in the student portal (My Berea)
- Keep an organized portfolio about your pursuit of these outcomes

### ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES: YOU CAN EXPECT ME TO . . .

#### **Be accessible and confidential. I will . . .**

- be available for meeting with you during office hours or via telephone and e-mail. Appointments available by request.
- maintain confidentiality. The only people with whom I am allowed to share information about you are those individuals who have an "education right to know," meaning those staff and faculty who are "aiding the effort of a student to successfully complete their current term."<sup>2</sup>

#### **Help You Learn to Negotiate Berea's Rules, Rationales, and Resources. I will . . .**

- be knowledgeable of and communicate college policy and the requirements and processes of the curriculum, General Education, and academic and labor programs
  - I will help you explore and explain the rationale behind those.

<sup>2</sup> Donna Morgan (Title IX officer, Berea College). "FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act." Handout. July 2012.

- I will help you see how the structure of learning, labor, and service manifests Berea's mission
- assist you in understanding the purposes and goals of a liberal arts higher education and its effects on your life and personal goals.
- assist you in finding appropriate campus resources to promote your success and engagement.
- study, discuss, verify, and sign official forms with you, as needed.
- assist you with developing course schedules and offering advice on choices of electives.
- demonstrate how to use of BoND and other resources on the student portal (My Berea).

#### **Know You. I will . . .**

- become well acquainted with your academic and educational needs.
- encourage and guide you as you define and develop realistic goals.
- encourage and support you as you gain the skills to develop clear and attainable educational plans.

#### **Help You to Mature toward Responsibility and Independence, I will . . .**

- help you with academic and career planning processes and in exploring options and resources.
- monitor and document your progress toward meeting your goals.
- assist you in developing decision making skills and skills in assuming responsibility for your educational plans and achievements.
- provide you with accurate information concerning alternatives, limitations, and possible consequences of their choices, both academic and personal.
- lead interventions, if needed, help you reach goals and be successful.
  - I would do this in collaboration with Labor Supervisors, Collegium, Athletic Coach, and others as appropriate in response to Performance Checks, Early Feedback, mid-term and final grade reports, and other indications of academic difficulty.

#### ADVISEE RESPONSIBILITIES: YOU ARE EXPECTED TO . . .

#### **Maintain Contact & Stay Prepared. You need to . . .**

- schedule regular appointments and make regular contact with your advisor during each semester.
  - know how to contact your advisor (via email, telephone, office visits, and/or CPO).
- prepare for every advising appointment and bring any materials you and I may need.
- keep a record of your progress toward meeting your goals and organize official documents in a way that enables you to access them when needed (such as a three-ring binder!).
  - use the online Degree Evaluation tool on the myBerea Web portal to make sure your records and those in the Student Service Center agree with one another.
  - take responsibility for your decisions and actions including ongoing evaluation of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and for academic choices.

### **Know Berea. You need to . . .**

- know the requirements of labor program, general education, and your individual degree programs when admitted.
- imbibe Berea's mission, ethos, and history.
- familiarize yourself with academic policies, procedures, and requirements, published each year in the Catalog & Student Handbook (available online at [www.berea.edu/cataloghandbook](http://www.berea.edu/cataloghandbook)).
- gain knowledge about college programs, policies, and procedures.
- Become acquainted with and use available resources (such as The Learning Center, Counseling and Disability Services, Career Development, etc.).

### **Know Yourself. You need to . . .**

- be kind, honest, brave, and venturesome.
- explore your culture and past (and how it relates to the rest of America's cultures and power structures).
- explore what it means to be in an emerging adult (a stage of psycho-social development).
- clarify your values and goals.
- articulate your interests, abilities, weaknesses, strengths, hopes, and fears.
- develop a vision for your future at Berea and beyond.

### **Be Proactive & Persistent. You need to . . .**

- ask questions if you do not understand an issue or have a specific concern.
- follow through when there are questions regarding grades, credits (including transfer and advanced-placement), or requirements. Don't let something slip through the cracks!
- learn to gather relevant decision-making information.
- become involved in extra-curricular activities and dare to build community.
- take final responsibility for making your own decisions based on the best information and advice available.

### Schedule

To be honest, because I have never taught this class, I have no idea what we are going to do from week to week. But my plans are to meet with each of you one-on-one several times during the semester, and we will devote about an hour every week in class to the goals listed here. All I know is that I am going to strive to make sure that our activities will be worthy!

