

ACADEMIC ADVISING MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of effective advising at Southwest Minnesota State University is to provide all students with the necessary academic information that allows them to make informed decisions about their academic careers. This can only be done by creating a working relationship with a faculty or staff member who assists students in developing an academic degree plan.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STUDENTS:

- Become knowledgeable on how to access your DARS report (Degree Audit Reporting System) and review it each semester.
- Review your DARS to find your advisor's name in the student data section of DARS.
- Contact and meet with your advisor throughout the semester to form a relationship. If possible, schedule appointments in advance.
- Discuss your DARS and a personalized Grad Plan with your advisor.
- Become knowledgeable of degree requirements, policies, procedures, and campus resources.
- Come prepared to advising appointments with questions and/or topics that you want to discuss.
- Be sure your major and minor degree goals are accurate and up to date.
- Check your SMSU email account regularly and respond to messages from your advisor.
- Reflect upon your career goals and educational plans. Be prepared to discuss them in detail.
- Create educational plans based on interests, values, and short and long term goals.
- Explore extracurricular activities in order to enhance your personal and academic goals.
- Be open and willing to consider other perspectives.
- Accept responsibility for your decisions and actions that affect your educational progress and goals.
- Be an advocate for yourself in course petitions. You have the right to move a course petition forward even if your advisor does not support your petition request.
- Seek help before a situation becomes a crisis.
- Change your advisor if your advisor is no longer suitable for your needs.

WHAT STUDENTS CAN EXPECT FROM THEIR ADVISOR:

- Initiate and maintain regular contact with you throughout the academic year.
- Provide you with accurate and up-to-date information regarding course and major requirements, as well as policies and procedures.
- Assist you with course selection for the upcoming semester and provide your registration access code each semester.
- Provide a safe and confidential environment for academic questions and concerns.
- Encourage you as you gain the skills and knowledge necessary for success.
- Support you in defining your academic and career goals.
- Assist you in creating a personalized Grad Plan that is consistent with your goals.
- Help you in securing another academic advisor when your major changes.
- Discuss co-curricular activities and other responsibilities with you and how they fit with your academic goals.
- Refer you to campus support services, organizations, and faculty and staff members as needed.
- Be accessible during office hours by appointment, telephone and/or email.
- Assist you in reviewing your DARS report and provide information regarding the petition process.

FOUR-YEAR ADVISING PLAN:

First Year – Inquire and Explore

- Meet your advisor
- Get to know your professors
- Discover student organizations and get involved
- Develop a personal resume
- Attend career fairs
- Explore/investigate a major plan of study – some majors will have special criteria that you need to meet beginning your first year such as field experiences and course prerequisites.

1

Second Year – Assess and Choose

- Complete introductory courses in your major and evaluate your commitment
- Identify your short-term and long-term goals
- Attend career-related workshops and clinics
- Update your resume
- Activate Handshake account, SMSU's career community and job board at smsu.joinhandshake.com/login

2

Third Year – Investigate and Plan

- Plan your remaining courses through graduation
- Engage in leadership roles or employment opportunities
- Update your resume
- Seek assistance in Career Services
- Lead beyond the classroom through work, volunteer, intern experiences, or job shadow in your field
- Attend career/job fairs
- Investigate graduate school opportunities if you are contemplating a master's degree
- Complete a degree check found at: www.SMSU.edu/go/degreecheck

3

Fourth Year – Evaluate and Graduate

- Complete all degree requirements
- Utilize Career Services
- Develop a job search plan and initiate six months prior to graduation
- Research prospective employers
- Maintain relationship with your academic advisor
- Review your degree check evaluation
- Update your resume
- Complete the Campus Clearance Process found on the SMSU Registration and Records website

4

WHAT IS ACADEMIC ADVISING?

An educational process that, by intention and design, facilitates students' understanding of the meaning and purpose of higher education and fosters their intellectual and personal development toward academic success and lifelong learning (National Academic Advising Association [NACADA], 2004).

Through a developmental process it 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 course and career planning and academic progress review, and an agent of referral to other campus agencies as necessary (Academic Advising: Campus Collaborations to Foster Retention, November 4, 1999).

DISCOVER. ENGAGE. LEAD.



Southwest Minnesota State University,
A member of Minnesota State