2017-2018 First Year of Studies’ Anniversary Lecture Series on Advising

The 2017-2018 First Year of Studies’ Anniversary Lecture Series on Advising was designed to celebrate the University of Notre Dame's First Year of Studies’ dedication to and innovation in the field of undergraduate advising. The presentations in the series were as follows:

- *Introductions to The First Year of Studies Anniversary Lecture Series* by Hugh R. Page
- *Not an Easy Place: New Strategies for Helping Anxious Students* by Elizabeth Wilcox, September 25, 2017
- *The Architect of Hope* by Elizabeth Wilcox, September 25, 2017
- *Culturally Competent Advising: Beyond the Demographics*, by Pamela Nolan Young, November 13, 2017
- *Encouraging Achievement on an Uneven Playing Field: Framing the Discussion*, by Jennifer Fox and Holly Martin, November 13, 2017
- *Establishing an Advising Community: Launching an Organization and Fostering Scholarship*, by Mathew Bumbalough, February 26, 2018

With the exception of the introductions to each presentation and *The Architect of Hope*, these presentations are published here, in CurateND. The copyright to all material belongs to the authors individually and not to the First Year of Studies or the University of Notre Dame. Please direct any questions on the series to Jennifer Fox or Holly Martin and any questions on the presentations to the authors.
Our comments are intended to help organize and focus the formal discussions that follow Pamela Nolan Young’s lecture, “Culturally Competent Advising: Beyond Demographics.” Through these comments, their supporting Power Points, and highlighted resources we hope to build on her work and apply it to three specific discussion questions: 1) How do we create a strengths-based frame for our support services so that we encourage rather than stigmatize our students?, 2) How do we help students understand the importance of and help them gain access to the co- and extra-curricular activities they need to be competitive?, and finally, 3) What are the best strengths-based advising techniques for encouraging and assisting underprepared or disadvantaged students?

To set the stage for these discussions we will briefly discuss the importance of cumulative advantage and cultural capital, growth mindset and salient identities, and strengths-based (as opposed to deficiency-focused) advising. After our brief introduction to these points, we will break the group into discussion sections with discussion leaders who are experts in some aspect of each of the above three questions and note-takers who will keep track of the most important ideas and suggestions.

What follows is the Power Point that we used to guide our introduction.
Encouraging Achievement on an Uneven Playing Field: Framing the Discussion

Jenny Fox, Assistant Dean, First Year of Studies
Holly Martin, Associate Dean First Year of Studies
Confronting the Problem of Cumulative Advantage

- This discussion is designed to build off of Pamela Nolan Young’s talk on “Culturally Competent Advising: Beyond Demographics”

- There will be three general topics for small group discussion:
  - How do we create a strengths-based frame for our support services so that we encourage rather than stigmatize our students?
  - How do we help students understand the importance of and help them access the co- and extra-curriculars they need to be competitive?
  - What are the best strengths-based advising techniques for encouraging and assisting underprepared or disadvantaged students?
Confronting the Problem of Cumulative Advantage

In the overall mobility index from The Upshot at the New York Times, Notre Dame ranks 58 out of 64 elite institutions. This measure reflects both access and outcomes, representing the likelihood that a student at Notre Dame moved up two or more income quintiles.

Discussion Questions Focused on Highly Successful Strategies

• An understanding of the importance of cumulative advantage

• Strengths-based advising rather than advising focused solely on deficiencies

• Growth mindset in combination with salient identities
Cumulative Advantage and Cultural Capital

- Different economic trajectories arise from early inequalities in which some persons are advantaged in their early years, an advantage that may compound over time (Ferraro and Kelley-Moore, 2003). On the other hand, others are disadvantaged because of genetic or environmental factors, and these disadvantages also accumulate (Preston, Hill & Drevenstedt, 1998). Early advantages and successes lead to further advantage, whereas, others are disadvantaged early and face a cascade of additional risks to health, wealth, and well-being (Ferraro & Kelly-Moore, 2003).

Cumulative Advantage and Cultural Capital

Examples of Cumulative Advantage:

- Access to AP courses
- High school curriculum with strong writing component
- Abroad experiences
Cumulative Advantage and Cultural Capital

• Acquired understandings to be successful in college are not equally accessible to every student walking into an advisor’s office. Cultural capital can be defined as previously acquired knowledge necessary to successfully navigate in a particular environment. In an academic environment, this means developing recognition of implicit and explicit expectations, both inside and outside the classroom.

Examples of cumulative advantage and cultural capital:

- Experience with networking
- Internships
- Notre Dame specific cultural capital
Strengths-based advising shifts the focus from problems to possibilities. Rather than focusing on tasks that a student cannot complete or the problems the student faces, the advisor emphasizes the abilities a student possesses. He or she helps the student realize how her or his strengths can be used as resources when facing the challenges of the college experience (Schreiner & Anderson, 2005).

## Value of Strength-based Advising

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental focus on deficits</th>
<th>Strengths-based focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Possibilities</td>
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<td>Low motivation</td>
<td>High motivation</td>
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<td>Low engagement</td>
<td>High engagement</td>
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Students feel understood at a deeper level
Students experience higher motivation levels and a sense of confidence
They consider the academic advising relationship to be positive

5 Steps of Strength-based Advising

1. Identify student strengths
2. Affirm and increase awareness of strengths
3. Envision how strengths can achieve their goals
4. Plan steps to meet goals
5. Apply strengths to challenges they face
Growth Mindset

• It’s easy to attain a growth mindset. One reason why is we all have our own fixed-mindset triggers. When we face challenges, receive criticism, or fare poorly compared with others, we can easily fall into insecurity or defensiveness, a response that inhibits growth. Our work environments, too, can be full of fixed-mindset triggers…To remain in a growth zone, we must identify and work with these triggers. Many managers and executives have benefited from learning to recognize when their fixed-mindset “persona” shows up and what it says to make them feel threatened or defensive. Most importantly, over time they have learned to talk back to it, persuading it to collaborate with them as they pursue challenging goals (Dweck, 2016).


Advising Implications

• Does this framework naturally connect to certain styles/approaches to advising?

• How does mindset influence a student’s major/career choice?

• How do your business/mindset as an advisor influence interactions with students?

• Help students self-reflect on personal identities and their salience

(Mora & Putman, Intersectional Growth Mindset for Serving First Generation Students, NACADA, 2017)
Structuring the Discussions

• FYS faculty are evenly divided among the discussion groups; guests may choose any group of interest

• There are discussion leaders and note-takers already to go.

• The notes on the discussions will be sent to participants
Discussion Groups, Leaders, and Note-takers

• Strengths-based framing of support systems:
  – Discussion Leader:
  – Note-taker:
  – FYS faculty:

• Understanding and accessing vital co- and extra-curriculars:
  – Discussion Leader:
  – Note-taker:
  – FYS faculty:

• Strategies for strengths-based individual advising that assists underprepared or disadvantaged students:
  – Discussion Leader:
  – Note-taker:
  – FYS-faculty:
References


