

## DEVELOPMENTAL ADVISING THROUGH LIFE ROLES Leisure and Leadership

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*Expanding developmental advising through life roles offers the opportunity for advising to realize its potential as a developmental and integrating force in higher education. The author suggests a model for moving into these life roles as well as ideas for academic advisors to use in incorporating leisure and leadership perspectives into their advising.*

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If academic advising is to best serve students and continue to be a key developmental agent on campus, it must incorporate important life roles into its thinking and practices. Expansion into important life roles will provide a context for helping students plan their academic programs and achieve balance in life roles to best meet their educational goals.

Trends associated with the historical development of academic advising provide a foundation for moving into any number of life roles. Though historical roots are found in faculty advising primarily providing students with information relative to meeting requirements, those in the field have continuously moved to expand perspectives of advising to include students' life planning. The Terry O'Banion (1972) paradigm, which ranges on a continuum from scheduling to life planning, clearly demonstrates this expansion and opens the door for expanding into any number of life roles as they relate to academic and educational planning.

The document, *Developmental Academic Advising* (Winston, R. B., Miller, T. K., Ender, S. C., Grites, T. J. & Associates, eds., 1984), provides a comprehensive look at academic advising in higher education, including a theoretical framework for developmental advising that further supports life planning concepts. Thomas and Chickering (1984) not only identify common elements of diverse developmental theories regarding college age adults but also note characteristics of development of change-promoting institutions. Laff, Schein, and Allen (1987) further assert that the underlying theme of developmental advising is itself a blending of academics and student life. The holistic approach now becomes both a necessity and a possibility.

Paralleling these developments have been academic advising's continued efforts to establish ties with other campus departments. A few are orientation and admis-

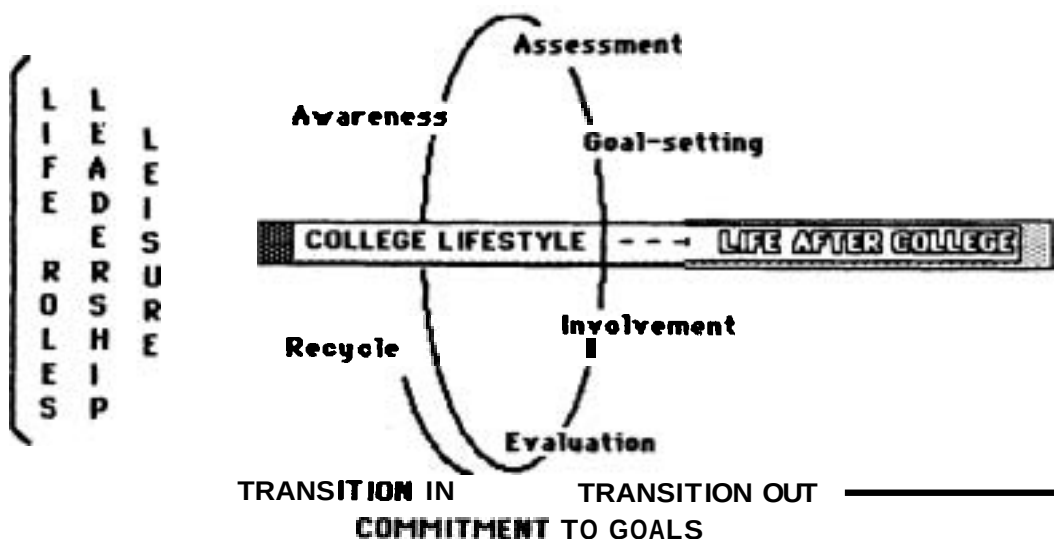
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★ JANICE ABEL, Ed.D., is director of Academic Advising Services at the University of Northern Iowa at Cedar Falls.

sions, which provides continuity in transition of new students into the university; data processing and registration, which develop information technology to enable advising to move beyond providing information; and career services, which provides programming for students making choices of a career and a major. The mode for linking with others has clearly been established within the profession. In short, the trends have not only been set, but require expansion into additional life roles if a total developmental approach to advising is to be achieved.

Two important life roles addressed in this article are leadership and leisure. Perspectives for both of these areas must be fashioned to accommodate a developmental advising mode. This is very different from simply considering leisure and leadership as an adjunct to academic planning. Rather, it means that advisors must develop a way of thinking and working with students relative to these life roles and their interconnections. It means academic advising units must join with leisure, leadership, and other related units in such a way that these interconnections have an impact throughout the institution.

## CHART 1 - DEVELOPMENTAL ADVISING



**A leisure perspective.** Reframing leisure concepts appropriate for academic advising is a relatively natural progression. First, professionals in leisure studies closely relate leisure with a wellness concept, which is, in itself, developmental. Ryan and Travis (1981) outline a continuum of wellness ranging from disability to self-actualization. Sullivan (1984) argues that well-balanced development will best be served when wellness perspectives are recognized in a systematic way and are interfaced with developmental theories. While student developmental literature emphasizes

cognitive issues, a wellness perspective would balance out and include physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional dimensions. Therefore, academic advisors connecting a wellness perspective with their developmental foundations will not only enrich their basis for advising, but will provide a common ground for working with leisure professionals.

Second, further definition of a leisure perspective for academic advising professions can be identified by adapting a work-leisure relationship described in a threefold typology by Parker (1983). The first area assumes a fundamentally positive relationship between work activities and leisure activities. A second area assumes a negative, dissimilar, or contrasting relationship to work life. This opposition has been described as compensatory or competitive. The third area is the middle road relationship which is described as neutral or separate from work life.

This typology is particularly workable in guiding students in relating their leisure values and interests to their academic goals by replacing work life with academic life and then relating leisure in this threefold way. For example, the first area considers leisure pursuits that are closely related to one's academic major and/or **career**—experiences commonly considered the practical application of classroom learning. The second area is leisure pursuits set in contrast to the rigors of academic life, including those that assist the student to cope effectively with the stresses of contemporary life and/or to have fun. The third area includes leisure pursuits that would add to any of one's personal, social, physical, emotional, spiritual, or intellectual dimensions. Leisure in relationship to any of the three areas could be sought through co-curricular activities of the university or through other community services. In the final analysis, the leisure perspective used by academic advisors must enable students to link their academic pursuits with their leisure so as to better understand the whole of their personal lives.

**A leadership perspective.** Though leadership development has been an assumed goal of higher education, notable perceptions of leadership needs can be useful to advisors in developing approaches to advising in this area. First, leadership is now being thought of as a means of enabling a larger segment of the population to constructively participate in creating a world community. No longer is leadership limited to training designated officials; rather, interest is in empowerment of people. Jacqueline Fleming (1987) specifically addresses the importance of developing leadership talents of blacks. In her remarks at the 1987 NACADA conference she summarized: "In short, leadership skill, or power-motivated behavior, is the shortest path to academic and intellectual development of blacks in college. Because leaders are best able to work effectively with other people, they are also effective in expressing their needs constructively."

Second, a balance between leadership in work life and civic life is a necessity. An underlying theme of Newman's Report on Higher Education Policy (1985) was the importance of focusing not on technical expertise or career, but on developing "the ability to be creative, the willingness to take risks, and the desire to participate constructively in the civic affairs of the country."

Third, comprehensive leadership education **must** address concepts and issues related to leadership in a global community as well as practical aspects of skill development. Here, then, a leadership perspective for academic advising must include both academic and co-curricular experiences of students. It is also important for academic advisors to find ways to ensure that all advisees are **challenged** to examine their leadership interests not only through their career, but through civic interests as well! How can advisors help students relate general education to their leadership endeavors? How can advisors help students select combinations of general education, major, and co-curricular experiences to develop leadership qualities students have **determined** to be important?

Academic advisors can begin by asking themselves these questions.

1. How can I incorporate a wellness perspective into my advising approach?
2. How do I help students become aware of their leadership and leisure interests? How do they interconnect them with their academic pursuits?
3. How do I challenge students to exam their leadership interests in civic as well as career life?
4. Am I as knowledgeable of leisure and leadership assessments as I am of major and career choices?

The major question now becomes:

*How can developmental advising professionals systematically incorporate these two life roles into advising and related programs on campus?*

Consider the following.

Bring together university members from academic and co-curricular areas having leisure, leadership, and student development interests. A major task of this group would be to identify and bring together activities that would challenge students to set learning, leisure, and leadership goals, and to actively pursue their achievement.

The framework shown on the following chart provides parameters for designing this kind of effort and illustrates the potential scope of developmental advising. Within these parameters the unique qualities of an institution and its students can be accommodated. The horizontal dimension represents the tracking of students through the university taking into consideration critical events of the college experience and developmental changes of students. Developmental advising in contrast to prescriptive advising as described by Crookston (1972) can occur along this dimension. Academic advising represents systematic efforts to help students understand academic expectations, identify career and major goals, develop academic plans, and successfully achieve their academic pursuits. The vertical dimension represents the process that challenges students to become more involved in a total developmental process. For success, ways must be found to involve students who perceive reality as merely going through college, attending classes, collecting credits, and preparing for a job. Sullivan (1984) charges that there are many of these students. They have little understanding of what the university has to offer; therefore, in a real way they have cheated themselves. Along this dimension, it is therefore particularly important to be proactive rather than reactive and to be collaborative in garnering support for a broader range of student involvement. Goal setting along this dimension crosscuts any

of one's life goals, including academics, leisure, and leadership. Likewise, means of achieving these goals are planned and sought through co-curricular as well as academic experiences.

A cyclic process of awareness, assessment, goal-setting, involvement, and evaluation serves as a basis for this kind of effort. This process is interactive rather than linear. For example, a student may select co-curricular activities that result in greater self-awareness; this, in turn, leads to further assessment, and so forth. A major task of advising is to identify campus resources that emphasize any points of this cyclic process.

**Awareness and assessment.** A core assessment program serves as an entry for student participation and facilitates participation in programs and services already in place. For example, a leisure core scenario might be a large group setting whereby leisure and work life values are presented; this would be followed by individual assessments. Examples of leisure assessments might include the Leisure Well-Being Inventory (McDowell, 1978) or the Leisure Activities Blank (McKechnie, 1975). These allow students to assess their leisure values and interests in much the same manner as Holland's Search identifies career interests. Likewise, a core leadership scenario might follow the same kind of format.

**Goal setting and evaluation.** Developmental advisors would be central to goal-setting opportunities available throughout a student's college experience. Periodic reviews provide means for students to revise goals and achieve new levels of development. Part of the goal-setting process would be to identify journal or record-keeping options suitable for the individual. Some students may wish to keep a record on a computer data base; others might choose a journal written in narrative form. This kind of record keeping can serve as a predecessor to a more formalized developmental transcript program.

**Involvement.** A key element for success will be the extent to which there is an institutional commitment to leadership development and involvement of students in out-of-class activities. Students must view participation in university programs and activities as an expectation from the very beginning of their contacts with the university. The university image must portray it, top administrators must say it, faculty must promote it, and students must believe it. One key question is this: What incentives motivate those students to participate who would not have done so otherwise? Sufficient resources and good programming practices must follow.

In summary, an academic advising unit using this developmental advising framework should include in their audits the following questions.

1. *What advising activities help students relate their academic, Leadership, and leisure pursuits to each other?*
2. *How visible are programs and connections among them with respect to the cyclic process described in the model?*
3. *What advising programs and services track students through their university experience?*

4. How are academic advising professionals relating and giving support to leadership and leisure units?
5. What is the quality of information available on co-curricular activities and the way they relate to academic offerings?
6. What co-curricular record-keeping options are available to students?
7. How does the advising mission statement address leisure and leadership roles?

If relating life roles to developmental advising is to have any significant impact, it must survive professional scrutiny and be shaped by colleagues from across the profession. Though advising units may be creating important links with leisure and leadership education, they are not apparent. At a national level the National Academic Advising Association can provide a forum for highlighting these efforts and for encouraging discussion. It also seems timely that a major publication be written discussing the issues and practical ways of implementing this kind of advising. It would serve as a benchmark document for practitioners and as a powerful statement for developmental advising as we move into the 21st century.

What will state of the art developmental advising look like in the near future? Suggested here is that expansion into leadership and leisure life roles be a means of developing a more holistic approach to advising. Suggestions have also been made to challenge developmental advisors about ways to incorporate these concepts into practices. The developmental model presented provides a means for advising to influence and affect the entire university; it could allow academic advising to become an even greater integrating force on campus. Most important is that professional colleagues vigorously critique and test these ideas to ensure that an educational mission will be defined that will best contribute to the contemporary lives of students. Then the profession need not speculate on its future; it will have created it!

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Alphonse N. Novels  
Steven C. Ender

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## THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTAL ADVISING FOR HIGH-ACHIEVING MINORITY STUDENTS

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*This study investigates the impact of developmental advising activities with high-achieving minority students at a predominately white institution. Results indicate that involvement in developmental advising had a positive impact on participating minority students' cumulative grade point average.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Concerns about declining enrollments and retention have prompted colleges to re-examine existing recruitment policies and implement a myriad of student support activities. Among these support activities are 1) **learning centers** (Sullivan, 1980), designed to help students become better and more efficient learners; 2) **supplemental instruction**, structured to facilitate student mastery of the content of courses in which they are enrolled (Blanc, DuBuhr, and Martin, 1983); and 3) **academic advising as a developmental, student-centered activity** (Habley, 1981; Ender, Winston & Miller, 1984).

Of particular concern in the enrollment and retention area is the decreasing number of black students participating in higher education and the negative disparity between white and black student retention (McCauley, 1988). Research suggests that student attrition statistics are significantly higher for black students than for whites. This is particularly true for those black students attending predominately white institutions (Astin, 1975, 1978; Fleming, 1984; Tracey, and Sedlacek, 1985). The literature also suggests that, for black students, non-cognitive issues such as locus of control, goal setting, ability to deal with racism, interpersonal relationships, and social and academic integration are as important—or are *more* important—to academic success than standard academic characteristics (Astin, 1975; Sedlacek & Brooks, 1976; Tinto, 1975). Tracey and Sedlacek (1985) argue that predominately white institutions should develop intervention strategies to promote black students' development with regard to these non-cognitive areas.

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★ **ALPHONSE N. NOVELS** serves as the assistant director of the Learning Center at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP).

**STEVEN C. ENDER** is an assistant vice president of Student Affairs at the same institution.

## THE PROBLEM

Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), as well as most other post-secondary institutions in the state of Pennsylvania, is increasingly concerned with the matriculation and retention of minority black students. In an effort to attract a larger pool of outstanding black freshmen to IUP, a Board of Governors Scholarship program was implemented in 1985 for those black students with SAT scores around 1000 and who were in the top two-fifths of their high school graduating class. The scholarship provided a tuition waiver for eight semesters of study contingent on the students' academic performance. The scholarship also requires a 2.5 cumulative grade point average (CGPA) for continuation at the end of the freshman year.

During the 1985-86 academic year 12 Board of Governors Scholars were admitted to IUP. These students had a mean SAT average of 1007 and their mean high school rank was in the 77th percentile. Using IUP's predicted regression CGPA formula these students were expected to earn a 2.51 CGPA at the end of their freshman year. However, their actual academic performance resulted in a mean CGPA for the group of 1.90. Unfortunately, most of the original scholars did not retain their scholarship. Follow-up interviews with these 12 students indicated their lack of academic success was attributed to several non-cognitive variables and dynamics which occurred during their freshman year.

Primarily, this group of students felt a deep sense of non-assimilation into the University community; were isolated from peers, faculty, and support staff; and had a general lack of awareness of University policies, procedures, and support programs — academic, social, and cultural. In fact, none of the 12 students even knew one another. Most reported a similar academic pattern. Due to their success in high school they took college courses for granted, fell behind in their coursework quickly, and were in a pattern of failure before they took any action(s) to resolve their adjustment problems. In effect, when they realized they were in deep academic trouble, it was too late. Furthermore, most had no idea of where help was or how to gain this information.

## THE INTERVENTION STRATEGY

It was determined, as this student-reported information was becoming available, that these high-achieving high school students needed structured, timely, and continuous assistance and support if their past successful academic profile was to continue in college. The developmental advising support program IUP offers to high-risk freshmen through the institution's Learning Center seemed appropriate for this group (Ender, 1987). This program primarily consists of three one-credit-hour structured courses taught by faculty advisors for their high-risk advisee population. The three modules are structured around the content themes of "University Awareness," "Strategies for Successful College Study," and "Career Exploration/Validation" issues. Faculty advisors are also charged, as part of their job description, to attempt to develop personal, out-of-classroom academic relationships with their advisees and provide overall guidance, mentoring, and monitoring services for their students during the entire freshman year.



Through the course series, students acquire knowledge and goals appropriate to the personal interpretation of strategies and behaviors which are necessary for success in college. The **Educational Planning and Development** course requires students to examine the purpose of higher education and their roles in this process. Emphasis is placed on goal-setting and establishing short- and long-term academic goals. Students are required to develop a preliminary educational plan based upon specific areas of study. The University's policies, requirements, structure, procedures, and resources are also explored. The second course in this series, **Strategies for Achieving Academic Success**, is designed to help students develop more effective self-monitoring behaviors and to understand and to apply specific learning techniques that underlie study strategies. Finally, **Career Exploration** provides students with the opportunity to examine the world of work, assess and confirm their interests, and make realistic decisions on academic majors and subsequent careers. Students are given a theoretical and practical framework on which to build and, through further exploration, to choose a profession that is compatible with their academic skills, aptitudes, and life goals.

As we were offering Board of Governors Scholarships to new minority applicants for the 1986-87 academic year, we offered the 24 black students the opportunity to participate in the developmental modules taught by a minority educator and to utilize this educator in an advising capacity. This participation was not a requirement of the scholarship but was highly encouraged.

## RESULTS

The 24 students admitted under the scholarship program in 1986 were very similar to the 1985 freshmen. They had a mean SAT average of 971 and had a predicted freshman grade point average of 2.50. Of the 24 students, 4 chose to not participate in the developmental modules. This group had an SAT average of 1022. Six students participated in one of the courses. They had an SAT average of 1010. Fourteen students participated in two of the courses (fall and spring) and they had an SAT average of 940. At the end of the freshman year we compared the CGPA of these three groups and contrasted the entire group performance related to the 1985 matriculates. Results confirmed to hypothesis that participation in the program would enhance grade point averages.

Table 1 displays the academic performance of the 1985 and 1986 matriculates. The 24 students matriculating in 1986 had a mean CGPA at the end of their freshman year of 2.23 compared to the 1.91 CGPA earned by the 12 students in the 1985 group.

Of more striking interest are the CGPAs of the three sub-populations of 1986-87 matriculates. Those students who enrolled in two developmental modules had the lowest SAT mean but the highest CGPA at the end of the freshman year. Those students who enrolled in one module had the second highest CGPA. The four students with the highest mean SAT, but enrolled in no modules, had the lowest CGPA. An analysis of co-variance failed to indicate statistical significance between the three groups but the small cell sizes probably contributed to this outcome.

**TABLE 1. CPGA x Class x Module Participation**

| Group                       | N  | SAT X | CGPA |
|-----------------------------|----|-------|------|
| 1985-86 (12)                | 12 | 1006  | 1.91 |
| 1986-87 (24)                | 24 | 971   | 2.23 |
| 1986-87 (0 modules, n = 4)  | 4  | 1022  | 1.53 |
| 1986-87 (1 modules, n = 6)  | 6  | 1010  | 2.06 |
| 1986-87 (2 modules, n = 14) | 14 | 940   | 2.49 |

### CONCLUSIONS

We are impressed and encouraged with the results of this rather informal study and are seriously considering the concept of requiring Board of Governors Scholars to participate in the developmental advising program as a condition of their award. The informal feedback we received from participating students and their minority faculty advisor indicated that the course content was helpful and the relationship these students developed with their advisor was personally meaningful. We cannot say what really made a difference—the course(s) or minority faculty contact—but differences do seem to have occurred. Certainly, the small cell sizes within the three subpopulations of the 1987 matriculates prohibit any attempt to generalize these findings to a broader population but we are confident that these interventions were indeed positive and helpful. Readers should be alert and sensitive to issues of academic achievement for those minority matriculates who have been high achievers in high school. Our experience suggests that they are burdened by higher education assimilation issues and problems similar to those of minority and majority students who are admitted in an academic at-risk category.

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