

**United Tribes Technical College  
Academic Advising Philosophy**

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*Academic advising at United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) is a role assumed by the department chair or shared by the chair and the instructor(s). UTTC also has a First Year Advisor employed to serve as the relational advisor for students. In the academic advising relationship, advisors work collaboratively with the students to achieve their desired academic outcomes. When a personal challenge interferes with the student's academic success, the advisor finds appropriate assistance for the student through the referral process.*

*This resource is intended to serve as a guide for the academic advising process at UTTC.*

*Lisa Azure, VP of Academic Affairs*

## **SECTION I: ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Academic advising empowers students in the development of meaningful educational plans that are consistent with their personal, academic, and professional goals. Advising at United Tribes Technical College is a partnership in which students and academic advisors co-navigate the college experience from matriculation to commencement. This partnership is a key component in engaging, connecting, and transitioning students into and throughout their college experience. The academic advisor serves as a primary point of contact for students for academic and career development. All students are assigned a primary faculty advisor upon entrance to the college based upon the declared program of interest.

### **Faculty Advisor Responsibilities**

1. Understand and effectively communicate the curriculum, graduation requirements, and college policies and procedures
2. Encourage and guide students toward academic, professional, and personal success
3. Guide students in successful program completion
1. Assist students with academic procedures such as course add/drops, withdrawal from the college, attendance expectations, academic contracts, registration information, and the right to appeal
4. Ensure students are registered for the appropriate classes in a timely manner
5. Refer students to other resources as appropriate
6. Demonstrate a high level of engagement; develop a mentoring relationship with the advisee
7. Advocate for the advisee when appropriate
8. Maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality
9. Visit with each advisee in person, virtually or on the telephone a minimum of three times each semester after the initial meeting during which the student registers for classes.

### **Advisee Responsibilities**

1. Be proactive and self-directed in their academic progress
2. Develop a relationship with the advisor/mentor
3. Attend appointments and respond to outreach
4. Arrive to scheduled meetings on time
5. Conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner
6. Maintain open and effective communication with advisor
7. Develop academic success plan with First Year Advisor and then follow it
8. Accept responsibility for personal and academic success

### **First Year Advisor Responsibilities**

2. Provide academic advising to prospective and current students

3. Serves as a relational academic advisor for first year students in designated degree/certificate programs, ensuring students are informed about degree plan requirements, academic procedures such as course add/drops, withdrawal from the college, attendance policy, registration information, and the right to appeal
4. Coordinate tutoring services and mentoring for students
5. Manage and coordinate advising events
6. Create academic success plans (including course schedules) with first year students (individually or in small groups)
7. Meet with first year students in person or virtually a minimum of three times the first semester and twice their second semester
8. Develops academic success plans to support students on probation
9. Refers students to the appropriate faculty advisors for their program to register for courses identified on the academic success plan

## **SECTION II: ADVISING RESOURCES**

### **NACADA: the National Academic Advising Association**

NACADA promotes and supports quality academic advising in institutions of higher education to enhance the educational development of students. NACADA provides a forum for discussion, debate, and the exchange of ideas pertaining to academic advising through numerous activities and publications. NACADA also serves as an advocate for effective academic advising by providing a Consulting and Speaker Service and funding for Research related to academic advising.

Becoming a NACADA member means joining the ranks of more than 10,000 professional advisors, counselors, faculty, administrators, and students working to enhance the educational development of students. Members enjoy various benefits, discounts, and opportunities within the organization and its many services and resources (<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu>).

### **Advising Mentors**

Department chairs pair each new faculty member with an advising mentor in order to assist new faculty with the advising process. Ideally, this mentor will be another faculty member within the department who has several years of experience advising students at UTTC and is able to guide the new faculty member regarding academic advising. The Dean of Instruction and Career and Technical Education Director are also available to serve as advising mentors.

### **Appreciative Advising**

UTTC is committed to implementing positive ways to increase student retention and success rates. Appreciative Advising harnesses the power of the organizational

development theory of Appreciative Inquiry and the positive psychology literature to provide a framework for increasing advisor and student success.

Appreciative Advising is the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials. It is a fully student-centered approach to student development. (<http://www.appreciativeadvising.net>)

## **Advising Roles**

The role of the academic advisor is no longer simply to enroll students in classes. It includes understanding how to incorporate a relational element in advising with deeper conversations on careers, transfer opportunities, nonacademic commitments, financial issues and much more.

- A. The faculty advisor is in the transactional advising role. This role focuses on processes and procedures of academic advising such as registering students, adding/dropping courses, entering early alerts, initiating college- and student-initiated withdrawals. Faculty advisors discuss topics with students such as the courses they need to take, careers, internships and more.
- B. The first-year advisor is in the relational advising role. This role is intentionally designed to build trust, engage in ongoing communication, serve as a resource for information, and to build a sense of belonging between a student and adviser. The first-year advisor meets with the students individually to complete the Academic Success Plan.

## **SECTION III: REGISTRATION LESSONS LEARNED**

### **Error 1: Enroll in too many credit hours**

Students register for too many credits and then feel overwhelmed. Twelve credits is full-time during the fall and spring and 6 credits is full-time in the summer. If a student wishes to take an overload, 20 or more during fall and spring and 9 during the summer, the student must submit an email request to the advisor. The advisor will forward the email request to the Vice President of Academic Affairs who will either approve or deny the request.

### **Error 2: Avoid repeating courses in which they earned failing grades**

Students are reluctant to repeat courses they previously failed. It is important, however, that they re-take the course the semester immediately following. The only way they can improve their GPA is to re-take the course and earn a passing grade that will replace the failing grade in the GPA calculation. If they do not re-take the failing course, and are on probation, they will be suspended the next semester for not raising the GPA.

Error 3: [Attempt to drop a course after the deadline for withdrawals](#)

Students request to be withdrawn from a course(s) after the last day to withdraw. They must be informed of all deadlines and then held accountable.

Error 4: [Fail to resolve incomplete grades within the time limit](#)

Students are allowed two weeks into the next semester to change a grade of Incomplete to a letter grade. Students should be reminded this is a firm deadline so the student should pace him or herself in order to complete the course requirements on time.

Error 5: [Take advanced courses with a weak or inadequate background](#)

Some students prefer not to take the recommended courses in the sequence and believe they can complete a higher-level course. If they fail the higher-level course, they then have to register for the recommended course and it adds an extra semester to their completion time.

Error 6: [Take all their early courses exclusively in the general education areas](#)

Students want to get all the basic courses out of the way. The reverse of this situation is true, also. Some students do not want to take any basic courses. The course sequence for each program of study has been designed so students have an opportunity to develop a foundation for subsequent coursework.

Error 7: [Seek academic or personal help late in the semester](#)

Students want to succeed on their own and seek help only when it is too late. Stress the importance of touching base with advisees at least 3 times each semester, regardless of their status.

## **SECTION IV: DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATIONS**

### **International (Canadian) Students**

International students have additional admissions requirements that are outlined on the Admissions website page and in the college catalog. International students have limited eligibility for financial aid. They are not eligible for Learning through Experience (LTE) student employment because the program is funded by Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funds that are exclusive to students enrolled in federally recognized tribes. This includes First Nations students from Canada. International students are eligible for ND Non-Beneficiary scholarship funds.

## **SECTION V: RETENTION STRATEGIES**

### **Attendance, Early Alerts and Referrals**

Every instructor is expected to maintain current attendance reporting. Instructors update the attendance for all of their courses on a weekly basis no later than close of business on

Friday of the same week. It is the advisor's responsibility to regularly monitor attendance by reviewing the total number of absences accrued by each advisee. If a student is accruing excessive absences, and satisfactory academic progress is being impacted, the advisor enters an Early Alert and schedules a meeting with the student to discuss potential barriers the student may be facing that are impacting attendance.

Department chairs are responsible for monitoring the submission of attendance, grades and early alerts for the faculty in their programs. Failure to maintain student progress in these areas is subject to corrective action.

Every United Tribes Technical College employee has a duty and responsibility to refer students to the appropriate services when it is considered in the best interest of the student. Because of their close contact with students, the faculty advisors are typically the first to become aware of situations with students that necessitate a referral. All referrals for anything other than academic progress are directed to the Wellness Counselor assigned the department. The Wellness Counselors have the expertise and knowledge of support services to ensure the student receives the services he or she needs. For more information about the Early Alert process, refer to the Early Alert System Resource Guide.

## **Wellness Counselors**

The Wellness Counselors are committed to providing support services to enhance life-long learning and personal growth to UTTC students. The Wellness Counselors offer a variety of services, which include behavioral health support, disabilities services, therapeutic interventions, assistance in the transition to college life, referral services, and campus educational programs.

## **Disabilities Services**

UTTC complies fully with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Disabilities Services provides support to any student with a documented disability who chooses to identify themselves to Disabilities Services. Support services include assistive technology, academic coaching, extended time for tests and note taking assistance. Students with disabilities should register with the Wellness Counselor who serves as the point of contact for disabilities services at the beginning of each semester, as services do not automatically carry over from one semester to the next.

Faculty members must comply with recommendations as long as students meet the criteria for services and the accommodations are considered "reasonable". Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to the tasks, environment or to the way things are usually done that enable individuals with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program or a job (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The accommodation cannot alter fundamental goals or outcomes of a course or lower the standard expectations of student performance.

## **Smarthinking**

UTTC provides online tutoring sessions for students who are unable to come to campus through Smarthinking. Students can access the online tutoring feature by logging into their my.uttc.edu account > click on the Student Information Tab > Learning Tools > Launch Smarthinking.

## **Early Alert System**

UTTC's Early Alert System (EAS) is a proactive, communication driven support system that provides timely identification and interventions to work with individual students to assist in generating plans to overcome challenges to college success. The system assists UTTC students by linking them to faculty and staff who can provide and connect students to available resources and strategies. The early alert serves as an opportunity for students to take ownership of their success and empower them to accomplish academic and personal goals. The system helps faculty and academic advisors connect and communicate with students as issues arise. The additional cross-wide partnerships create a culture of collaboration focused upon the best interest of UTTC students.

## **SECTION VI: SECURITY AND PRIVACY**

### **FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act)**

Under the terms of FERPA regulations, any employee of United Tribes Technical College may not release any student information *unless* the student has provided a signed release. The signed releases for all students are found in the Registrar's Office s-drive View folder. Forms are updated every semester.

Confidentially must be maintained when asked a question about a student. It is not uncommon for scholarship organizations, law enforcement agencies, and particularly family members to call advisors and ask for information about students. The following protected academic information may not be released to anyone other than the student without written consent of the student:

Grades	Social Security Numbers
Ethnic Background	Student Schedules
Address	Telephone Number or Email Address

Any questions concerning FERPA may be referred to the Registrar's Office. All academic advisors should have a copy of this law, which will be provided by the Registrar's Office.

### **HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) additionally apply to various college services. HIPAA allows disclosure of protected health information without patient authorization for purposes of a) payment, treatment, or organizational operations as defined by HIPAA. There may be additional privacy laws applicable.

Advisors refer students for appropriate services. Communication between the health care entity and the academic advisor is within the organizational operations insofar as that communication is serving to support academic success.

The student needs to grant permission (authorize release) to the health care entity before any disclosure of protected health information is shared for any other reasons. Further clarification is available by the Student Health Center's designated Privacy Officer.

When health information is placed within a student's educational record, then the health information becomes legally bound to FERPA mandates, as well. For example, filing a copy of a student's medical documentation supporting excused absences for a period of time makes protected health information a part of the student's academic record and invokes FERPA. Good faith efforts are critical. It is best practice to obtain the student's consent prior to any discussion with health care provider by the advisor.