



## **Building a Strong Academic Advising Relationship**

### **Literature:**

[\*The Advising Relationship is at the Core of Academic Advising\*](#)

[\*Assuming the Role: The successful advisor-student relationship\*](#)

### **Welcome Email to Advisee's**

Dear Advisee,

Welcome to the BLANK Program, we are excited to have you joining us! Throughout your time at Etown, we will meet often to discuss your academic progress, your career goals and how to make the most of your time at Etown! Before we meet, I thought you might like to know a little about me (pronouns, top 5 strengths, professional interests, educational background, research interests, etc.)

Please schedule a time to meet with me before Registration begins on DATE, you can schedule with me by (explain how to make an appointment with you- i.e. [Starfish Scheduling Feature](#), [Calendly](#), [Doodle Poll](#) or [Signup Genius](#).) Please let me know if you need any [accommodations](#) such as a first floor location or a quiet room, so I can find a suitable space for us to meet.

Prior to our meeting please complete the [Major & Career Reflection Activity](#) in Starfish, this will help me in getting to know a little bit about you, and review the [Preparing for Academic Advising](#) resources.

I look forward to welcoming you to our program and learning more about you!

Thanks,  
Signature Line

### **Group Advising**

If you or your program is hosting a group meeting, consider an activity that would allow students to get to know each other. As students in a major and cohort together, they will likely cross paths many times, building a relationship with peers is just as important as building a relationship with an advisor.

- If you plan to host a group virtual advising session, consider using one of these activities below, they come highly recommended from upper-class student leaders:
  - Zoom around the Room- give participants a few seconds to grab something nearby or in the room they are in that is red/related to your childhood/doesn't belong to you/that says Etown/smells nice and then have the student share what they picked.
  - World Traveler- students find a picture of a place they've never been but would like to go and make that picture their virtual background (if virtual background isn't a capability, student can share their screen with the photo)
  - [Visit this Link for more ideas](#)

- Have an upper-class student in the program join the group to share about their journey in the major and career aspirations they hold
- If you plan to host a small in person group advising session:
  - Consider bringing paper and writing utensils and encouraging students to create a table tent or name tag that lists their name and pronouns
  - Encourage the group members to introduce themselves and what attracted them to this major, what career field they are interested in pursuing and/or something they've learned that has really inspired them.

### **Preparing for your first Advising Appointment**

When reviewing the [Appreciative Advising](#) model, we begin in the Disarm phase, this is where strong advising relationships are built and the foundation is set. It's important to recognize that creating a safe and welcoming environment for students will set a positive first impression. Prior to and during the first session be intentional about:

- Space- if meeting in person make sure you have somewhere for the student to sit, that your space is welcoming and is decorated in a personal way
  - Power Dynamic- be aware of how your physical and emotional being could impact the power dynamic, if you are able- meet in your office without a desk between you, where you're both sitting at equal levels or consider meeting in a neutral space.
- Communication- consider your own communication skills and be conscious of your nonverbal and verbal communicators when meeting with the student
  - Non-Verbal
    - Gestures
    - Vocal Variety
    - Smiling at students
    - Relaxed & Open (not crossing arms or legs) body posture
    - Removal of distractions
    - Eye contact
    - Professional casual dress
  - Verbal
    - Calling students by preferred name
    - Use of inclusive pronouns
    - Unrelated small talk
    - Feedback to students
    - Asking for student feedback
    - Use of own first name
- Greeting- if meeting in person, greet the student at the door, welcome them in, introduce yourself and share your pronouns, use the students preferred name
- Time- be on time for the student, ask if they have a class or another appointment, explain in the beginning if you do as well, stay cognizant of the time throughout the session
- Review- Check for any [FERPA](#) releases for the student, look for any [Starfish](#) flags or kudos from the current semester, review [ADA Accommodations](#) and the request process.

*If you are planning to meet in person, please adhere to COVID-19 protocols (mask wearing, appropriate social distancing, sanitizing) and do not meet in person if either individual is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, has been in close contact with an individual who tested positive, or are awaiting test results.*

## **The First Advising Appointment**

### **Part 1: Relationship Building**

1. Spend time getting to know the student, review their [Major & Career Reflection Activity](#) submitted via Starfish. Ask questions such as:
  - *What are your interests, your favorite things about Etown, plans for the future?*
  - *What's been the best thing about college so far?*
  - *Tell me about you.*
  - *Tell me about your academic strengths/weaknesses/any accommodations you've used in the past to support you or your learning*
  - *How did you make your decision to start this major?*
  - *Are there other majors/minors you may add?*
  - *Which aspect of this major are you most looking forward to over your time at Etown?*
  - *Do you have any concerns about classes in this major? If so, what most concerns you?*
  - *What career fields do you hope to pursue after graduation?*

### **Part 2: Informational Advising**

(if you are advising virtually consider sharing your screen to show students where to find this information or asking them to share their screen so you can navigate together)

2. Remind students to check the [important dates](#) for the current semester
3. Have a student log in to Jayweb and locate their [Grad Report](#) (p. 17)
4. Show students where to find [Degree Planners](#) and the [College Catalog](#)
5. Have the student locate the [Jayweb Instructions](#) for Registration
6. Make sure the student understands their [language placement](#)
7. Instruct the student on how to find and [resolve any holds](#) they may have (p.4)
8. Review any particulars for your program
9. Take notes and encourage the student to take notes as well.