What is advising?

Academic advising is a key component of your experience at Gonzaga. It is an opportunity to form a collaborative relationship with a faculty member, who will help you develop and achieve your educational, professional, and personal goals. Your advisor is granted formal authority to approve your academic program and to assist you in making adequate progress toward your desired degree. But advising is not just telling you what courses you should take and signing the appropriate forms so that you can graduate on time. The purpose of advising is also to help you develop as a person – to find your place in the university community, to think critically about who you are and the roles you want to play in society, and to build the personal characteristics we seek in our graduates: reflective and critical thought, lifelong learning, spiritual growth, ethical discernment, creativity, and innovation.

“You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him find it within himself.”
-- Galileo Galilei

“You can get help from teachers, but you are going to have to learn a lot by yourself, sitting alone in a room.”
-- Dr. Seuss

Advising Outcomes

The advising process helps students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will make them successful in their educational careers and in their personal and professional lives. Because advising is a developmental process, the outcomes achieved by students will change over the duration of the relationship. Specific dispositional, behavioral, and cognitive outcomes for each of the four academic years will be communicated throughout the process. In general, as a result of the advising process, students should:

• Be able to use available campus resources to plan and monitor their academic progress, leading to the successful completion of a degree.
• Understand and appreciate the University’s mission and how it is expressed in the core curriculum and the rest of their educational career.
• Be able to articulate their values and aspirations, and how those are reflected in their academic, co-curricular and extracurricular experiences.
• Understand and be prepared for their post-baccalaureate options, including service, graduate or professional school, or career entry.
• Exhibit independence and initiative in finding, evaluating, and using relevant information to help them make choices about their short- and long-term goals in life.

What can you expect of me as your advisor?

First, you can expect me to ask you a lot of questions. My job is not to tell you things, but to help you take responsibility for planning your own future. Of course, you can also expect me to have some answers, too, or be able to refer you to someone else who will. Specifically, you can expect me to:

• Guide and support your exploration of personal, career, and academic goals; your assessment of your own interests and abilities; and your development of short- and long-term plans.
• Help you develop an understanding of the purpose and goals of higher education, your roles and opportunities in the university community, and the connection between your Gonzaga experience and other goals.
• Guide you as you develop a program of study that will lead to graduation; communicate the curriculum and graduation requirements for that program; and help you monitor your progress toward completion.
• Explain clearly university, school, and department policies relating to your course of study, as well as larger policies such as the university ethos statement and the policy on academic honesty.
• Provide you with accurate information on the resources available on campus to help you with academic, career, and life planning.
• Refer you to appropriate services on campus to help you meet academic or non-academic needs that arise.
• Maintain posted office hours for in-person meetings and respond to email messages in a timely manner.
• Maintain confidentiality of your records and our conversations as required by law.

What do I expect of you as my advisee?

Ultimately, the goals you set at Gonzaga and how well you progress toward them are up to you. I can’t guarantee you’ll graduate in four years, or that you will graduate at all. I can’t guarantee you’ll enjoy yourself while you’re here, or find the perfect job after you leave. It is your responsibility to make adequate progress toward your goals. I am here to help you, but ultimately your success is up to you. Specifically, I expect you to:
• Schedule regular appointments or make regular contact with me each semester, and come prepared to each appointment with questions or materials for discussion.
• Become knowledgeable about college programs, policies, and procedures, and ask questions if you do not understand an issue or have a specific concern.
• Develop an academic plan to graduation, keep track of your progress on that plan, and revise the plan as conditions change.
• Work to clarify your personal values and goals, and discuss openly with me your interests and abilities.
• Seek out relevant information before making decisions, and accept responsibility for those decisions.
• Take advantage of campus resources that are available to support your needs, e.g., academic issues, mental and physical health, financial aid, housing, co-curricular activities, and career planning.

What if things change?

The relationship we have, as advisor and advisee, will undoubtedly change over time – it’s supposed to. As you get a better understanding of who you are, where you are going, and how your Gonzaga experience plays into that, you may decide that a different direction, and a different advisor, would be more appropriate for you. That’s fine; I can help you with that decision and with the formalities of making the change, should that time come. You are not stuck with me for the next four years. If you have concerns about our interactions or the assistance you feel you are getting from me, I would appreciate it if you would raise them with me first. If you are not comfortable doing that, or if you feel I am not addressing your concerns adequately, please contact Dr. Overbay in Herak 227 or the office of Academic Advising and Assistance in College 104.

More resources

A non-exhaustive list of helpful resources is given here:
• Important Dates and Deadlines (http://www.gonzaga.edu/Campus-Resources/Offices-and-Services-A-Z/Registrar/ImportantDatesandDeadlines/default.asp)
• Zagweb (https://zagweb.gonzaga.edu)
• Undergraduate Catalog (http://www.gonzaga.edu/catalogues)
• Advising at Gonzaga (http://gonzaga.edu/advisingatgu)
• Academic Honesty Policy
• Career Center (http://www.gonzaga.edu/Student-Development/Career-Center-and-GAMP/default.asp)
• Counseling Center (http://www.gonzaga.edu/Student-Development/Counseling-Center/default.asp)
• Advisor’s Webpage (http://web02.gonzaga.edu/faculty/burchn/)