



Building a Culture of Care: Intentionality with Purpose

Teaching and Learning Tuesdays

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Piedmont Technical College



Agenda

Welcome and Background

**Piedmont Technical College Mission, Vision,
Values**

The Importance of Advising

The 6 C's of Advisement

Navigate and Advising

Never Lose An Opportunity

**Dr. Nita Staley-Abney
Dean of the PROPEL Division**

This presentation is designed to:

- Encourage
- Ignite
- Energize
- Inspire



- Fostering a culture of care is a core element of Piedmont Technical College's Mission, Vision, and Values. This professional development session will explore how nurturing such a culture can positively influence advising practices and student success in higher education.
- The session will also introduce the "6 C's" framework, which serves as a key guide for developing a culture of care, with a particular focus on its application in advisement.
- Drawing from peer-reviewed research, the session will underscore the significance of advising students with a care-centered approach, demonstrating how this method can boost student retention and contribute to their overall success throughout their academic journey.



Background

- Married to John (native of Saluda, SC). Mother of 5 beautiful girls!
- Born and raised in South Ozone Park (Queens), New York.
- The youngest of eight children.
- My favorite sports teams are the New York Yankees and the New York Giants.
- Loves professional wrestling! Don't judge 😊.
- Enjoys bowling and was a part of a bowling league in New York.
- Comes from a family of gospel singers and is related to well known gospel singers in the industry.
- Both parents originated from South Carolina and relocated to New York in 1961.
- First generation college student.
- At the age of 6 months, older brother, Barry Fitzgerald, developed the disease called meningitis. The disease left him with severe special needs, deafness, and a seizure disorder (grand mal).
- On February 14, 2016 at the age of 52, my brother Barry passed.
- Barry Fitzgerald was and continues to be my greatest inspiration and motivation for pursuing a higher education degree.
- Worked with the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (Aiken County) for several years, before transitioning to work in higher education.
- Through my brother Barry's life, I learned the valuable and priceless lessons about compassion, humility and acknowledging the needs of each and every person, which will be different.
- The drive, compassion and motivation to live a life dedicated to meeting the needs of others is forever embedded in who I am.

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Mission, Vision, Values

- Every successful company, organization or group in history has shared something in common: they all had a unifying mission.
- Missions are critical in not only aligning objectives, but also unifying a large group of people toward a shared purpose .
- A key element of Piedmont Technical College's mission, vision, and values is Mission Goal #4, which states the following: “Develop and enhance a culture of care among faculty and staff”. (PTC, 2025).
- A culture of care isn't about caring for you simply because you're similar to me. It's about genuinely caring for, respecting, appreciating, and valuing you as an individual.
- Building a culture of care involves the collective effort of the entire team, working together with purpose and unity.
- Research shows that fostering such an environment leads to:
 - Improved retention rates.
 - Increased positivity within the organization.
 - A stronger impact on collaborative opportunities.
 - A direct impact on customers (i.e. students, community partners, etc.)(Tenney, 2023).

Question 1

Question 1 - When you think of an advisor, what are some keywords that associated with their roles, responsibilities and duties?

- With the help of Microsoft Copilot, a word cloud featuring keywords associated with college advisors was generated.
 - Academic guidance
 - Mentorship
 - Career planning
 - Goal-setting
 - Time management
 - Course selection
 - Communication
 - Problem-solving
 - Support
 - Advocacy
 - Development
 - Coaching
 - Resource connection
 - Collaboration

The Importance of Advising

- Advising plays a crucial role in the academic success of students, whether they attend two-year or four-year colleges. It is one of the most vital services offered in higher education.
- According to Zhang et al. (2019), advising has always been an essential element in colleges and universities, but it can also be challenging. Why is this the case?
- Advisors offer a wide range of support to students, including guidance on selecting majors, registering for courses, developing academic and career plans, switching majors, handling transfer inquiries, and addressing financial aid concerns.
- A study by Hawthorne et al. (2019) highlights that academic advising is one of the most widely used strategies to promote student success and improve retention rates in higher education institutions across the United States.



Question 2

- Question 2 - What is the average amount of time students may spend with an advisor per session?
- As noted by Goemans and Kapinos (2024), the duration of advising appointments depends on the topics being addressed, with the average session lasting between 30 to 45 minutes.

The Importance of Advising

- Advising holds considerable value, especially when focused on the key elements that directly contribute to student success (The Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2018).
- Research findings reinforce the critical role that advisors play in providing quality guidance, fostering engagement, and offering integrated support – factors that are strong predictors of student success (Hawthorne et al., 2019).
- The outcomes of one specific peer reviewed study emphasized the importance of promoting regular and consistent advising appointments for community college students with academic advisors (Goemans & Kapinos, 2024).
- Advising administrators can use this research to develop departmental policies and programs that encourage community college students to engage with academic advisors regularly throughout their academic careers (Goemans & Kapinos, 2024).
- By encouraging frequent advising sessions, advising administrators can increase the likelihood that students receive the necessary guidance, support, and resources needed to make well-informed decisions about their course selection, academic progress, and career goals and pathways (Goemans & Kapinos, 2024).
- The quality of interactions between advisors and students is vital.



The 6 C's provide a framework for creating a culture of care, which is essential for effectively addressing students' needs through advising:

- **Care** – Demonstrating care for students can take many forms, such as preparing thoroughly for advising sessions and actively listening to understand and address their needs.
- Whether the session lasts 15 minutes or an hour, students can quickly gauge whether you care, often within the first minute, through both verbal and non-verbal cues.
- **Compassion** – Compassion means truly caring about the student's well-being and being deeply committed to supporting their growth. It is expressed through acts of kindness, heartfelt empathy, and an earnest dedication to their success.

The 6 C's that help in understanding how to develop a culture of care which is the foundation needed for addressing students' needs through advisement:

- **3) Competence** – A core element of advising is having the knowledge and training. Being able to locate resources and confer with other members of the team to ensure the most accurate information is being provided to students. Being timely in delivering information to students.
- **4) Communication** - Communication is the main element and mode used to receive information and convey important information to students. Monitoring communication is always critical, whether verbal or nonverbal.
- *Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me is a saying that I have heard for many years. Words are the most powerful weapons that have the potential to either inspire or destroy.*
- Reflect on the vastness and grandeur of a forest – how majestic and enduring it appears. Yet, it takes only a single spark of fire to unravel its beauty in moments. Let us choose our words with the same mindfulness, for they too have the power to build or destroy.



NACADA, 2023



The 6 C's that help in understanding how to develop a culture of care which is the foundation needed for addressing students' needs through advisement:

- Courage** – Courage means having open and honest conversations with students that empower them to take control of their educational journey. By providing truthful guidance, advisors can help students explore alternative paths to success and growth.
- Commitment** – Commitment is about being fully dedicated to supporting students in achieving their goals. It involves fostering a culture of care and continuously striving to create an inclusive, supportive environment that values and addresses the needs of diverse student populations.

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Navigate+ Advising Process= Successful Educational Plan



- Building relationship
- Asking questions
- Confirming major
- Identifying barriers
- Connecting to resources
- Planning
- Degree Planning
- Registration



Never Lose An Opportunity To.....

- As you leave here today, please remember to never take for granted the incredible opportunity we have to make a lasting difference in the lives of the students we serve.
- Advising is hard work, and it requires dedication. Never underestimate its importance – because it truly matters.
- We must seize every opportunity to guide students as they navigate their way toward a major or career path they can commit to, one that allows them to envision their future unfolding before them.
- Be intentional in all that you do to support student success. This is one of the greatest investments we can make – not only in our students but also in the college and the communities we serve.



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