

College 101: First Year Advising



“...trying to find the answers to life's persistent questions....”
First Year Advising Syllabus

Advisor Information:

Advisor: C. Fee

Office: Breidenbaugh 314E

Office Hours: WF 10:00-11:00 AM & MWF 1:00-3:00 PM; contact Linda Miller (x6750 or lmiller@gettysburg.edu) for an appointment

Office Phone: x6762

Home Phone: 717.528.4799 (Call before 10:00 PM)

E-mail: cfee@gettysburg.edu

The Advisee's Role:

- Understand and accept that **YOU** ultimately are responsible for your education and your own decisions.
- Be prepared when you come to advising sessions; be active in your advising session, and ask questions when you have them.
- Understand and communicate personal values, abilities, and goals.
- Provide accurate and truthful information when being advised.
- Initiate a purposeful relationship with your advisor and make regular appointments with that advisor, especially when necessary or when in need of assistance.
- Make sure your advisor can contact you when necessary, and answer any messages from that advisor promptly.
- Cancel appointments that cannot be kept.
- Learn and understand Gettysburg College's policies, procedures, and requirements as they relate to your academic success and/or degree completion.
- Follow through on plans-of-action developed during advising sessions.

The Advisor's Role:

- Develop a purposeful relationship with and be an advocate for each advisee.
- Inform students of the nature of the advisor/advisee relationship.
- Assist students in defining and developing expressed educational, career, and life plans.

- Help advisee to ascertain accurate educational information.
- Promote learning opportunities which will help an advisee define or meet personal goals and plans.
- Assist an advisee in preparing a program which is consistent with that advisee's abilities and interests.
- Help each advisee to monitor progress toward educational/career goals.
- Help each advisee to interpret and to understand rationale for institutional policies, procedures and requirements.
- As needed, inform an advisee of pertinent campus resources and special services available to that advisee.
- Help each advisee to identify additional resources that could enhance or supplement that advisee's academic or personal experience.

Some Tips for a Fulfilling and Successful College Career:

- Register for classes which you find interesting: It's the best path to academic success.
- Get involved in activities which you find engaging: It's a great way to forge lasting relationships.
- Prepare for your advising sessions: Your college career is your responsibility.
- Talk to your academic advisor regularly: Share joys and nip potential problems in the bud.
- Talk to each of your professors regularly: Contact is a key to success.
- Maintain good study habits: Go to class; keep a comprehensive calendar of upcoming assignments; get all reading and assignments done in good time. Avoid "Magical Thinking."

Advising Timeline and Special Circumstances:

Some First Year advisees come to our first meeting with a full course load with which they are very happy; some need to add courses, and a few want to chuck their schedules and start over. No matter where you fall in that spectrum, **DON'T PANIC!** Everything is set up to help you to get the courses you need and to succeed in them.

During the first week or so of classes I can advise you as you make any necessary adjustments; during the bulk of the term I can help you to trouble-shoot, as needed, and I appreciate an email or a quiet word after class from time to time, just to know that all is going well. I see most of my advisees almost every day during the fall term, so we generally stay in good contact. If you perceive any trouble looming, speak to your instructor about it and also come and see me; it's best to nip any difficulties in the bud.

In the late fall we will schedule your courses for the spring, and in the spring we will schedule your courses for the entire second year. After the first term we will not, alas, see each other nearly so regularly, so please make it a point to stay in regular contact, and don't wait for a crisis to erupt! Unless you request a change—which you may do—I will remain your advisor until you declare a major, and even afterwards I'd love to know how things are going for you. I am in contact with many of my advisees years after graduation, especially those who were in my FYS. I should note that I am still in contact with my own first year advisor, who taught me to hunt dinosaurs. I learned from the best: I'm **ALWAYS** happy to see you and to catch up! If I ever seem busy or flustered when you come to see me, rest assured that it has to do with my many other, more onerous duties; meeting with students is the best part of this job, and the one I most enjoy. If at first you don't succeed in finding me, PLEASE try, try again!

I generally strongly advise students not to get too worried about their schedules, especially in the first few weeks; once you've got a full slate of courses and activities, it's usually best just to find one's stride

and enjoy the ride. Which courses you happen to be in ideally should reflect your actual interests, not some perceived academic need. If, however, you are interested in pursuing certification in education, a Conservatory degree, or a health sciences career, it is important to get your ducks in a row immediately. Please tell me right away if these are paths you might wish to pursue.

Advising Resources:

I get to know most of my advisees pretty well, both inside and outside the classroom; I'm always happy to chat with you at length, but I'm particularly interested in helping you to understand the liberal arts ideal, to explore long-range intellectual and professional goals, and to articulate dreams and visions of your future. The nuts and bolts are largely your responsibility, although I am, of course, here to help you to master them. In any case, the advisor's role has many facets, and the relationship between advisee and advisor can, ideally, be a rich one. To better understand the part each of us plays in such relationship, I suggest that you check out these Frequently Asked Questions before our first individual meeting together:

<http://www.gettysburg.edu/about/offices/provost/advising/faqs/>

The Gettysburg Curriculum can seem complex and confusing, even for the faculty at times; indeed, I generally find that within the first year most of my advisees can explain various nuances to me like old pros. This isn't too surprising, given how important the curricular requirements are to your academic journey at Gettysburg College. To that end, I ask that you consult the following resource prior to meeting with me concerning any curricular questions. Your beloved RAs and trusted PLA are also fantastic resources in this regard. When you prepare in advance our discussion will be better informed, we will be more efficient in our use of time, and you will be on your way to mastering the navigational techniques you will need to thrive at Gettysburg. Grab a healthy dose of empowerment and then come to talk to me about it:

http://www.gettysburg.edu/about/offices/provost/advising/gettysburg_curriculum/

The Language Requirement can seem particularly daunting, so it is worth spending a little time make sure that you understand it. This is the information devised by the Language Committee for new students:

<http://www.gettysburg.edu/about/offices/provost/advising/language/>

Advising in a Nutshell:

They call us "advisors" and not "directors" for good reason; our role is to offer guidance and encouragement, NOT to think or to act for our advisees; indeed, to do so would run contrary to the liberal arts context, which offers you a wide variety of challenges and experiences specifically so that you will gain intellectual tools, individual initiative, and personal confidence which will serve you well for the rest of your life.

Remember: This is **YOUR** life and **YOUR** college experience; I'm here to help you to gain the tools you need to thrive, to offer strategies for success and the benefit of experience, but **NOT** to tell you what to do!