

Ideas for Meetings with Advisees

Because college is structured differently from most high school systems of education, your advisees might benefit from discussion on the following topics.

- How to step up to the challenges of college-level academic work.
- How to read a syllabus.
- How to use an academic calendar to schedule classes, homework and assignment deadlines, and track exam schedules.
- How to manage time.
- How to make use of faculty office hours. How to contact faculty.
- How to study for exams.
- How to begin and complete writing projects by their deadlines.
- How to use graded assignments (exams, quizzes, homework, papers) as learning opportunities.
- Discussion about academic goals and how the student envisions achieving them. What do they wish to accomplish this semester, this year? What are potential obstacles to achieving those goals? What are their strategies for overcoming potential obstacles?

Ideas for Conversations with Advisees

This list is not meant to be exhaustive nor is it expected that you will necessarily discuss these issues with each of your students. These are just some ideas:

September

1. Why did you decide to attend Vassar? What are your expectations for college? How are they different than what you had for high school?
2. What are you good at? What things/skill/ways of thinking come naturally to you? Which ones do you struggle with?
3. What are you afraid of? Are there things that you try not to engage in because they might turn you off?
4. What new areas of the curriculum do you wish to explore? What specific resources at Vassar might you use?

October

1. What are your goals for the fall—socially and personally, as well as academically? What do you need to do to ensure that you meet your goals?
2. What is the balance between your academic commitments and other activities you are pursuing?
3. Have your study habits changed since arriving at Vassar? What are your study habits?
4. What would need to happen for you to feel like this semester was a success?
5. What do you need to do now to make sure that happens?

November

1. What strategies and/or supports are you using to find balance at Vassar?
2. Thinking back to the start of school, what new ideas, concepts, problems, or issues have interested you?

3. What organizations or activities have you become involved in? Why? Do you feel you are becoming connected to the Vassar community? In what ways do you feel connected and in what ways do you not?

December

1. What experience at Vassar so far has had the strongest effect on you?
2. In what ways have your expectations for this first semester (and College in general) been challenged or confirmed? Explain. How are you responding to the challenges? Have your expectations for the spring changed?
3. How have you changed?

February

1. How did you feel about the first semester? Was it what you thought it would be? If not, how was it different?
2. Were you satisfied with your performance in your courses? Were you satisfied with your grades?
3. What seemed to work well? What didn't work so well? What will you do differently this semester? How will you make sure these changes happen? How will you tell if they are working?
4. If you were to go back and start the fall over, would you do anything differently? Can you talk about that?
5. What will you do this semester to build on what you were able to accomplish in the fall?
6. Do you anticipate any challenges? Can you describe them?

March

1. As we think about courses for the fall, we really need to think about how these courses will either allow you to finalize your decision about a major and/or get you where you need to be to begin/declare your major. What are your current ideas about a major?
2. How are things going? Courses? Social life? Extracurricular experiences?
3. What are your plans for the summer? How will these experiences help you progress towards your goals?

April

1. Planning for end of semester work?
2. Have you been successful in meeting your academic goals this semester? If not, what adjustments can you make in order to be successful?
3. How have your curricular and co-curricular choices helped develop your interests and helped you make progress towards achieving your goals?

May

1. What have you learned about yourself this year that has surprised you?
2. What has been your favorite class so far? Why?
3. How have your interests and goals, both academic and non-academic, evolved since last semester?
4. Suppose you were asked to be on a panel of students who would talk to the incoming first-year class, what advice do you have for them? What do you wish that someone had told you?