

What the Linguistics Department faculty values in graduate student advising

The following is based on discussion in a department faculty meeting of materials compiled from relevant websites on student mentoring by faculty¹, and is intended to guide assessments of faculty during personnel reviews.

Students value most highly advisors who are seen as: (1) available/accessible, (2) knowledgeable/helpful, (3) personable/approachable, and (4) counselors/mentors. Each one of these general “core” qualities of effective advisors may be defined in terms of more specific advisor roles and responsibilities, as follows:

1) **Available/Accessible:** An advisor is someone who effectively communicates and interacts with students outside the classroom, and does so more informally, more frequently, and on a more long-term basis than course instructors.

2) **Knowledgeable/Helpful:** An advisor is an effective consultant – a role that may be said to embrace the following functions:

(a) Provide expertise in the field

(b) *Resource Agent* – one who provides accurate and timely information

(c) *Interpreter* – one who helps students make sense of, and develop appreciation for, the curricular requirements and co-curricular experiences (e.g. summer schools, conferences, networking opportunities, reviewing, grant writing, etc.)

(d) *Liaison/Referral Agent* – one who connects students with key academic and non-academic support and professional development services

(e) *Teacher/Educator* – one who helps students gain self-insight into their interests, aptitudes, and values; who enables students to see the connection between their academic experience and their professional goals; and who promotes students’ cognitive skills in problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking with respect to present and future professional choices.

3) **Personable/Approachable:** An advisor is a humanizing or personalizing agent with whom students feel comfortable seeking out, and who takes a personal interest in individual students’ goals, experiences, progress, and development.

4) **Counselor/Mentor:** An advisor is an advocate who students can turn to for advice, counsel, guidance, or direction; who listens actively and empathetically; and who responds to students in a non-judgmental manner – treating them as clients to be mentored, rather than as subordinates to be evaluated or graded.

Core expectations for mentors:

1. Model professional responsibility
2. Demystify graduate school
3. Encourage the effective use of time
4. Oversee professional development
5. Assist with finding other mentors

¹ Much of the above is taken from Cuseo, J. (2003) “Assessment of academic advisors and academic advising programs”, retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Links/assessment.htm>.