

# ADVISING

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## Planning for the Whole Person

One of our primary goals is for each student to become a self-directed learner who plans her own path of learning. But nobody starts there.

At first, any college is a new and unfamiliar territory. It has its own geography, its own people and languages, its own ways of doing things. At least at first, a person needs some help sorting out the confusion. So advising begins well before the student starts her first semester.

Professional advisors introduce her to the learning process at Alverno, its history and its purposes. She learns to use some of the special language of the college (terms like “assessment” and “feedback”). She also begins to work with planning and registration tools and the personalized matrix that will chart each ability level she demonstrates and completes.

She also learns to take an integrated approach in planning her future. She and her advisor look at her learning goals, at other time commitments and any built-in constraints (like a job or a long commute), and even at her physical health. This is probably the most important thing she will learn in the entire advising experience: to plan for herself as a whole person.

The student then applies what she is learning by working with her advisor to plan and register for future semesters.

## The First Year and Beyond

In her first year, the student’s advisor, her instructors, and other staff members provide support and guidance. They encourage the student to ask questions and to problem solve during her first months at Alverno. She becomes acquainted with her learning style, career interests, social-interaction skills, and the wide array of opportunities on campus.

As the student continues to work with her professional advisor, she more deeply explores majors and career options that are related to her interests, strengths, and values. Advisor and student also collaborate to map out learning plans for the following semester and beyond.

By the end of her first year, the student has usually chosen a major area of study. She may be definitely committed to a particular profession. Or she may use the major to explore her career options and interests further. Generally, at this point she transfers from her professional advisor to a faculty member in the field in which she plans to study.

As she advances, the student takes increasing control of planning her academic career. She continues to integrate her learning goals, her courses, and other options, and the resources she will need. Her faculty advisor becomes less an advisor and more a mentor, as she becomes less an advisee and more a self-directed learner.