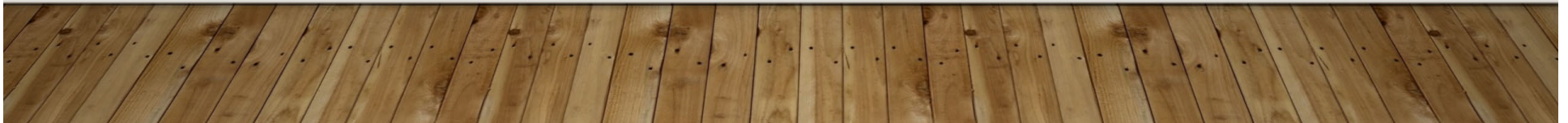


MATT WALLER, MSED MA
KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY



FINDING YOUR VOICE: ENCOURAGING SELF-ADVOCACY IN STUDENTS



SCHEDULE & OBJECTIVES



Background on self-advocacy skills

Define self-advocacy
Describe self-advocacy models and research



Suggested tips

Apply self-advocacy skills to the advisory role
Share flow chart and script ideas



Brainstorming

Generate new ideas on how to incorporate self-advocacy training into advising



Final tips

Advocate for your students and yourself



Time for Questions

SELF-ADVOCACY

- Self-advocacy is the ability to know one's own needs and rights – and the ability to communicate and make decisions about those needs and rights.

PS – it's OK to ask for help



SELF-ADVOCACY

- Research suggests that self-advocacy skills are related to:
 - Adaptation to college (Adams & Proctor, 2010).
 - In students with disabilities, persistence, academic performance, and GPA (e.g. Fleming, Plotner, & Oertle, 2017)
 - Higher GPA for students who are veterans (Kinney & Eakman, 2017).

SELF-ADVOCACY

- Daly-Cano, Vaccaro, & Newman (2015) grounded theory study on self-advocacy showed that students learn these skills from:
 - Their family members
 - From educators
 - From their peers

- But also from advisors like you!

MODELS IN ACTION

- Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy (2005) suggested a four-component model
 1. Knowledge of self
 - Understanding one's strengths & weaknesses, goals, and needs
 2. Knowledge of rights
 - Understanding of one's education, community, and personal rights
 3. Communication
 - Skills related to assertiveness, body language, listening, and compromise
 4. Leadership
 - Knowledge of resources and advocating for others

Escalation Process

Temperature Scale:



Cold

Minor concerns - email or talk to professor; no need to escalate if no response is given

Warm

Significant concerns - email professor; see "Sample Scripts for Students"

Hot

Major offenses - depending on the nature of the concern, go directly to the Dean of Students, Title IX Coordinator, or the President/Chancellor



START



Professor



Department Chair



Academic Dean



Dean of
Students/Title IX
Coordinator/Provost



President/
Chancellor

YES

- State your concerns clearly and free of emotion.
- In any written communication, use proper grammar and spelling.
- For significant and major concerns, documentation is crucial.

NO

- Don't be silent; let your voice be heard if you have a concern.
- Don't give up; be assertive, not aggressive.
- Direct contact with upper administration should only occur in cases of major wrongdoing.





SAMPLE SCRIPTS FOR STUDENTS



1

TO YOUR PROFESSOR

Dr./Professor _____,
I need more clarification on my grade. The withdrawal date is approaching and I would like to know if I need to stay in this class. Please advise.

2

TO YOUR PROFESSOR (2ND ATTEMPT)

Dr./Professor _____,
I still haven't heard back about my grade in your course. Please advise; I'm afraid that if I wait too long, I will have a Withdrawal/Fail on my transcripts. Thank you.

3

TO THE DEPT. CHAIR/DEAN

Dr. _____,
I have attempted to ascertain my grade in Dr./Professor _____'s course at least twice and still have not heard back. As you know the withdrawal deadline is approaching. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

4

TO THE DEPT. CHAIR/DEAN (2ND ATTEMPT)

Dr. _____,
I know that you are a very busy individual, but I still haven't heard back from you or Dr./Professor _____ about my grade. If I don't hear back by tomorrow, I'm taking my concern to the Provost/President. Thank you for your time.

TIPS

- ALWAYS START YOUR EMAIL WITH A GREETING
- BE RESPECTFUL IN YOUR WORD CHOICE
- ADDRESS YOUR CONCERN & STAY ON TOPIC
- PROOFREAD YOUR MESSAGE
- END ON A POLITE NOTE
- SIGN WITH YOUR NAME AND STUDENT ID NUMBER

SKILLS – SA & CR TRAINING

PALMER & ROESSLER, 2000

- SA – Self-Advocacy
 - Introduction
 - Greet instructor, introduce self by name, identify class
 - Disclosure
 - Identify ability status, explain effects
 - Solution
 - Describe previous accommodations, explain benefits, request use
 - Resources
 - Identify resources and how they will help, explain student responsibility
 - Agreement
 - Ask for agreement
 - Summary
 - Clarifies each others' roles
 - Closure
 - Positive statement and express appreciation

SKILLS – SA TRAINING

PALMER & ROESSLER, 2000

- SA – Self-Advocacy
 - Introduction
 - Same: Greet instructor, introduce self by name, identify class
 - Disclosure
 - Change: Explain need
 - Solution
 - Change: Describe a possible solution
 - Resources
 - Same: Identify resources and how they will help, explain student responsibility
 - Agreement
 - Same: Ask for agreement
 - Summary
 - Same: Clarifies each others' roles
 - Closure
 - Same: Positive statement and express appreciation

SKILLS - COMBINED METHOD

HOLZBERG, TEST, RUSHER, 2019

Table 3. Modified SACR Lessons.

| Lesson | Lesson name | SA/CR | Target behavior | Example |
|--------|---------------|-------|---|--|
| 1 | Introduction | SA | Greet instructor | Hello Dr. Smith, I am Joe Brown from your 11:00 a.m. Monday Biology class. |
| 1 | Introduction | SA | Identify disability status | I am here about my accommodations from disability services. |
| 1 | Introduction | SA | Explain disability in functional terms | I have difficulty paying focusing during quizzes and tests and it affects my grades. |
| 2 | Disclosure | SA | Identify previous accommodations | Last year, in high school, I took my tests in a separate setting. |
| 2 | Disclosure | SA | Explain benefits of past accommodations | A separate setting helped reduce distractions so I was better able to concentrate. |
| 2 | Solution | SA | Request use of accommodations | I think having a separate setting for tests in your class would be extremely helpful as well. |
| 2 | Solution | SA | Identify resources and how they help | I am registered with DS to get accommodations in my classes. |
| 2 | Solution | SA | Student explains their role | I will let DS know I have asked you for a separate setting for tests. |
| 2 | Agreement | SA | Ask for agreement | Does that sound like a good plan? |
| 3 | Specifying | CR | Specifying | I understand you have some concerns about this accommodation, may I ask what bothers you? |
| 3 | Reflecting | CR | Reflecting | So, giving me a separate setting for my quizzes and tests would be an unfair advantage over other students and it is extra work for you? |
| 3 | Mutualizing | CR | Mutualizing | From what we have discussed, I can tell that we both want me to do well in your class, but we are coming at it from different perspectives. |
| 3 | Collaborating | CR | Collaborating | Maybe we can come up with some solutions that work for both of us. |
| 3 | Inventing | CR | Inventing | A separate setting has been helpful in the past. I understand you are not comfortable with me taking my tests in a separate setting. What if I took my tests in your office during office hours? |
| 4 | Summarizing | SA | Summarizing | So, I can either take my quizzes and tests at DS or in your office during your office hours. |
| 4 | Selecting | CR | Selecting | Of the choices we discussed, which do you prefer? |
| 4 | Summarizing | SA | Restate accommodation | Great, I will take my tests in your office during your office hours. |
| 4 | Summarizing | SA | Student clarifies their role | I will let DS know that we made these arrangements and that you agree to administer tests during your office hours. |
| 4 | Closure | SA | Close with a positive statement | Thank you so much for working with me; I appreciate your time and help with this. I am looking forward to your class! |

Note. SA = self-advocacy; CR = conflict resolution; DS = disability services.

MODELS IN ACTION (CONT.)

- Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy (2005) suggested a four-component model
 1. Knowledge of self
 - Understanding one's strengths & weaknesses, goals, and needs
 2. Knowledge of rights
 - Understanding of one's education, community, and personal rights
 3. Communication
 - Skills related to assertiveness, body language, listening, and compromise
 4. Leadership
 - Knowledge of resources and advocating for others

BRAINSTORMING

What are some ways you are helping students advocate for themselves now?

What are some new ways you are thinking about implementing give your role? What do you want to steal and bring back to your institution?

What do you want other advisers, like your colleagues who might not be in the room today, to consider doing?



Self-Stick
Table Top Pad



Ideas:

Educate on catalogs/policies

Address culture

Templates

Educate on escalation

Practice/draft emails

Initiative & Ownership

Create space for communication/
community

Roleplaying

"Copy Me"

Put this in Orientation

FINAL TIPS

- Remind students that they need these skills, but that they are not alone (Siegel, 2016)
 - It is important to ask others to advocate for you where it is appropriate
 - We do this when we ask others to nominate us for awards or write letters of recommendation
 - Further, self-advocacy can become other-advocacy
 - Students who develop these skills can become advocates for others as well

PS – it's OK to ask for help

Self-Advocacy

In the context of academic advising, advisors can help any student practice self-advocacy. It could include:

-Teaching a student how to communicate with a professor about a grade concern.

-Pointing out campus resources that fit the student's needs.

-Teaching students to ask questions that are most beneficial for their situation.

**Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy (2005)
and Colorado State University**

Knowledge of Self

- Strengths
- Goals/Dreams
- Interests
- Needs
- Preparing for difficulties

Knowledge of Rights

- Educational rights
- Knowledge of resources
- Redressing of violations

Communication

- Assertiveness
- Articulation
- Negotiating/Compromise
- Independence
- Knowledge of jargon

Leadership

- Problem solving
- Advocating for change
- Resourcefulness
- Admitting mistakes

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Make **you** a priority



1 WHERE ARE MY RESOURCES?

Do I know how to find/contact Financial Aid or the Registrar's Office? Where do I go for medical issues? Where is my major department located?



2 WHO IS ON MY TEAM?

Who is my academic advisor? What campus organizations can I join? Does my school have a mentoring program?



3 WHAT AM I DOING THAT I SHOULDN'T BE?

Am I getting enough sleep? How much time should I be devoting to each of my courses? Do I procrastinate when faced with large assignments? Do I over-commit?



4 WHAT AM I NOT DOING THAT I SHOULD BE?

Do I organize my time and course materials? Do I know and understand my degree requirements? Am I getting to know my major professors?



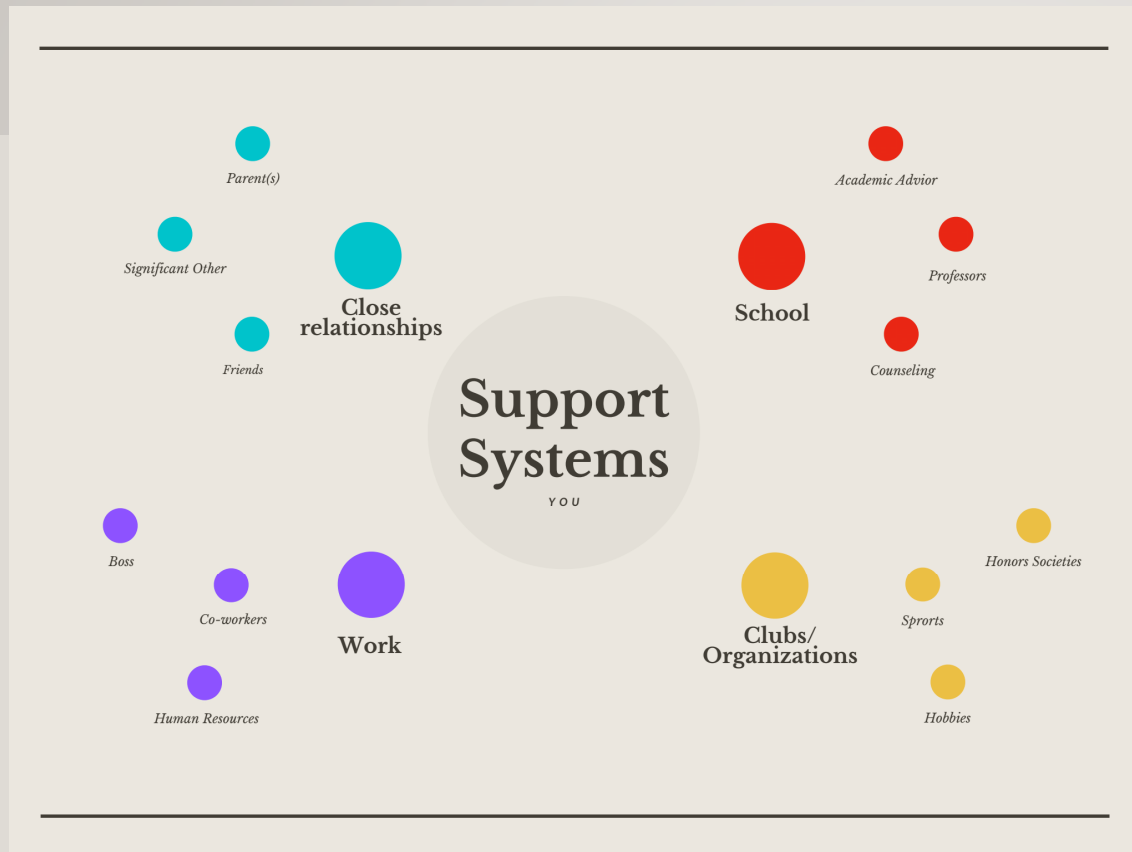
5 IS THIS THE RIGHT PLACE FOR ME RIGHT NOW?

Is this the right major for me? Is this right school for me? Should I take a break from school? Am I happy with this particular path?



6 WHAT ARE MY GOALS?

What do I hope to do with this degree? After graduation, am I going into grad school, the military, a career, or a job? What is my first SMART goal?



SELECTED REFERENCES

- Adams, K. S., & Proctor, B. E. (2010). Adaptation to college for students with and without disabilities: Group differences and predictors. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 22(3) 166-184
- Colorado State University. (2010). Self-Advocacy Handbook for College Students with Disabilities. Retrieved from <http://accessproject.colostate.edu/sa/>
- Daly-Cano, M., Vaccaro, A., & Newman, B. (2015). College Student Narratives about Learning and Using Self-Advocacy Skills. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 28(2), 213-227.
- Fleming, A.R., Oertle, K.M., Plotner, A.J., & Hakun, J.G. (2017). Influence of Social Factors on Student Satisfaction Among College Students With Disabilities. *Journal of College Student Development* 58(2), 215-228. [doi:10.1353/csd.2017.0016](https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0016).
- Holzberg, D.G, Test, D.W., & Risher, D.E. (2019). Self-Advocacy Instruction to Teach High School Seniors With Mild Disabilities to Access Accommodations in College. *Remedial and Special Education*, 40(3), 166–176. doi: 10.1177/0741932517752059

SELECTED REFERENCES (CONT.)

- Kinney, A. R., & Eakman, A. M. (2017). Measuring Self-Advocacy Skills among Student Veterans with Disabilities: Implications for Success in Postsecondary Education. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 30(4), 343-358
- Palmer, C., & Roessler, R. T. (2000). Requesting Classroom Accommodations: Self-Advocacy and Conflict Resolution Training for College Students with Disabilities. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 66(3).
- Siegel, V. (2016). Self-Advocacy: Why it's uncomfortable, especially for Women, and what to do about it. *ASCB Career Navigator*. Retrieved from <https://www.ascb.org/careers/self-advocacy-why-its-uncomfortable-especially-for-women-and-what-to-do-about-it-november-december-2016-newsletter/>
- Test, D. W., Fowler, C. H., Wood, W. M., Brewer, D. M., & Eddy, S. (2005). A Conceptual Framework of Self-Advocacy for Students with Disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education*, 26(1), 43-54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07419325050260010601>

LINK TO FULL HANDOUTS

- <http://bit.ly/NACADAAdvoc>



Escalation Process

Temperature Scale:



Cold Minor concerns - email or talk to professor; no need to escalate if no response is given

Warm Significant concerns - email professor; see "Sample Scripts for Students"

Hot Major offenses - depending on the nature of the concern, go directly to the Dean of Students, Title IX Coordinator, or the President/Chancellor



START



Professor



Department Chair



Academic Dean



Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator/Provost



President/Chancellor

YES

- State your concerns clearly and free of emotion.
- In any written communication, use proper grammar and spelling.
- For significant and major concerns, documentation is crucial.

NO

- Let your voice be heard if you have a concern.
- Direct contact with upper administration should only occur in cases of major wrongdoing.





SAMPLE SCRIPTS FOR STUDENTS



1

TO YOUR PROFESSOR

Dr./Professor _____,
I need more clarification on my grade. The withdrawal date is approaching and I would like to know if I need to stay in this class. Please advise.

2

TO YOUR PROFESSOR (2ND ATTEMPT)

Dr./Professor _____,
I still haven't heard back about my grade in your course. Please advise; I'm afraid that if I wait too long, I will have a Withdrawal/Fail on my transcripts. Thank you.

3

TO THE DEPT. CHAIR/DEAN

Dr. _____,
I have attempted to ascertain my grade in Dr./Professor _____'s course at least twice and still have not heard back. As you know the withdrawal deadline is approaching. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

4

TO THE DEPT. CHAIR/DEAN (2ND ATTEMPT)

Dr. _____,
I know that you are a very busy individual, but I still haven't heard back from you or Dr./Professor _____ about my grade. If I don't hear back by tomorrow, I'm taking my concern to the Provost/President. Thank you for your time.

TIPS

- ALWAYS START YOUR EMAIL WITH A GREETING
- BE RESPECTFUL IN YOUR WORD CHOICE
- ADDRESS YOUR CONCERN & STAY ON TOPIC
- PROOFREAD YOUR MESSAGE
- END ON A POLITE NOTE
- SIGN WITH YOUR NAME AND STUDENT ID NUMBER

Self-Advocacy

In the context of academic advising, advisors can help any student practice self-advocacy. It could include:

- Teaching a student how to communicate with a professor about a grade concern.*
- Pointing out campus resources that fit the student's needs.*
- Teaching students to ask questions that are most beneficial for their situation.*

**Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy (2005)
and Colorado State University**

Knowledge of Self

- Strengths
- Goals/Dreams
- Interests
- Needs
- Preparing for difficulties

Knowledge of Rights

- Educational rights
- Knowledge of resources
- Redressing of violations

Communication

- Assertiveness
- Articulation
- Negotiating/Compromise
- Independence
- Knowledge of jargon

Leadership

- Problem solving
- Advocating for change
- Resourcefulness
- Admitting mistakes

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

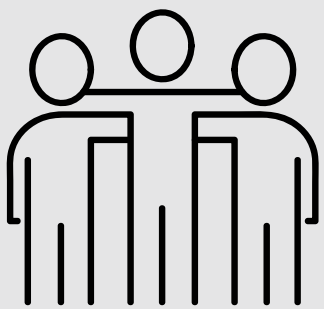
Make **you** a priority



1

WHERE ARE MY RESOURCES?

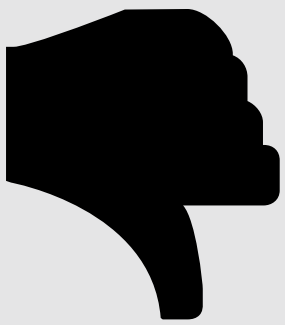
Do I know how to find/contact Financial Aid or the Registrar's Office? Where do I go for medical issues? Where is my major department located?



2

WHO IS ON MY TEAM?

Who is my academic advisor? What campus organizations can I join? Does my school have a mentoring program?



3

WHAT AM I DOING THAT I SHOULDN'T BE?

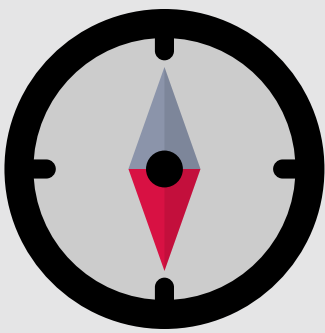
Am I getting enough sleep? How much time should I be devoting to each of my courses? Do I procrastinate when faced with large assignments? Do I over-commit?



4

WHAT AM I NOT DOING THAT I SHOULD BE?

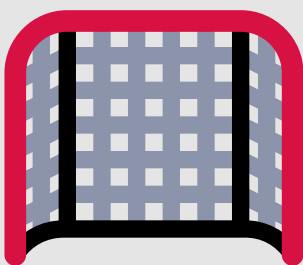
Do I organize my time and course materials? Do I know and understand my degree requirements? Am I getting to know my major professors?



5

IS THIS THE RIGHT PLACE FOR ME RIGHT NOW?

Is this the right major for me? Is this right school for me? Should I take a break from school? Am I happy with this particular path?



6

WHAT ARE MY GOALS?

What do I hope to do with this degree? After graduation, am I going into grad school, the military, a career, or a job? What is my first SMART goal?

**Support
Systems**
YOU

**Close
relationships**



Parent(s)



Significant Other



Friends



Work



Boss



Co-workers



Human Resources



School



Academic Advisor



Professors



Counseling



**Clubs/
Organizations**



Honors Societies



Sports



Hobbies