

# Vocational Education Instructor Advising

1988 Spring Conference Background Material  
Position Paper Prepared by the Vocational Education Committee

## Background:

Counselors are essential in the educational system, as is recognized by the matriculation bill and the Carnegie Report entitled High Schools: A Report on Secondary Education in America, both of which emphasize the need for an increased role for counselors.

Students benefit from both counseling and advising, and misunderstandings about the complementary roles of counselors and vocational instructor advisers serve only to handicap students, since lost communication can result in vocational students having inaccurate information about employment opportunities and educational programs.

Matriculation will place great demands upon the community colleges to assess, place, and monitor students as they move through the system. These activities will necessitate an increase in the full-time counseling ranks. In addition, changes in technology, family structure, and economic conditions will make it imperative that instructors engage in meaningful discussions with their students in order to better prepare them for the future. Advisement can help students to cope with uncertainty, to make decisions, to communicate with others their goals and academic needs, and to clarify their values.

Changing demographics have brought a changed student population. For a variety of reasons, some students are coming to college in need of increased basic educational preparation and with ill-defined educational goals (Asilomar IV, Sept., 1986). These students need the full support of both counseling and instructional faculty members.

All faculty share the same goal: student success. Their emphases, however, are different, as counselors focus upon students fulfillment of required courses for a certificate or degree, while instructors work to provide students with needed academic support and encouragement to complete the required courses successfully. Counseling and vocational instructor advising complement one another in working toward student retention and fulfillment of an educational goal.

## Rationale:

In Spring 1985, the Academic Senate adopted an instructor advisement position paper produced by the Educational Policies Committee. Later, at the 1986 Fall Conference, the Senate adopted a resolution encouraging vocational faculty members to participate in instructor advisement.

Vocational faculty are well equipped to advise students, since rapid changes in industry necessitate a continuous updating of faculty expertise. Also, vocational faculty actively participate in program advisory boards which give them access to the latest information in their fields, provide them the opportunity to initiate internships, and offer the opportunity to explore possible positions for their students. These activities provide the vocational instructor with the kind of information needed to do high quality vocational advising.

The following guidelines and advisory roles are proposed for vocational education instructor advising:

Guidelines (from Academic Senate Position Paper, Feb. 28, 1985):

1. Advisement should be limited to areas of the instructor's expertise.
2. Advisers should be given appropriate training.
3. There should be formal exchange of information between counselors and vocational education instructional faculty regarding majors and academic requirements.

Instructor Adviser:

Credential requirement, section 5200: Any person who holds a credential may give advice to students relating to an area or areas of the curriculum of the community college.

Role of the Instructor Adviser:

1. Provide information on matters related to specific vocational educational matters and career opportunities.
2. Help students select courses appropriate to their declared majors.
3. Help students select courses in appropriate sequence.
4. Facilitate the early identification of students whose goals and abilities indicate that they are potential transfer students and refer to counselor.
5. Provide contacts with professionals in the field to facilitate job placement and internships.
6. Recommend advanced placement for individuals having prior experience in the field.
7. Explain requirements for a certificate program as opposed to a degree program.
8. Provide mentor relationship to students.
9. Encourage students underrepresented in some areas and monitor student progress.
10. Establish curriculum articulation with responsible counselor in the area.

Counselor:

Credential requirement. Section 5200: A person providing counseling services to a student shall possess a valid community college counselor credential and be assigned specific times to directly assess student goals.

Role of the counselor:

1. Academic counseling in which students are assisted in assessing, planning, and implementing immediate and long-range academic goals.
2. Career counseling in which the student is assisted in assessing aptitudes, abilities, and interests and is advised concerning the current and future employment trends.
3. Personal counseling in which the student is assisted with personal, family, or other social concerns when that assistance is related to the student's education.
4. Coordination with the counseling aspects of other services to students which may exist on campus, including but not limited to those provided in programs for students with special needs.
5. Counseling services to first-time students enrolled for more than six (6) units, students enrolled provisionally, and students on academic or progress probation.
6. Maintain contact with responsible vocational education faculty within given areas to monitor student progress and be updated in changes in the field.

Planning, implementation, and evaluation of instructor advising programs should all occur, with counselors and instructor advisers coordinating the process of student advisement. Such collaboration is vital to student success.