

## **Ethical Challenges in Professional Academic Advising**

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## **Ethical Challenges in Professional Academic Advising**

The ethical challenges that Professional Academic Advisors face often begin with a simple, yet central, question: What is our role? We are unquestionably agents of the college, employed to ensure compliance of institutional policies and procedures. There is also an unequivocal emphasis placed on student success. Curriculum sequencing, retention, and degree completion are often emphasized, or even mandated, by external factors, such as state regulations and agreements, federal financial aid, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). At the same time, we approach student success by attempting to break down assumptions about why a student is here and what is most important to his/her college experience. In our evaluation of the student's values and expectations of us as advisors, we often find ourselves in conflict with institutional expectations.

In the case of Fort Lewis College (FLC) students who want to be full-time during the summer term, we must closely examine both our institutional duties and the student's desires. We attempt to approach these situations using a Utilitarian framework, in which we first evaluate and determine our stakeholders. We then evaluate and determine the interests and values of said stakeholders. Lastly, "we seek a resolution that yields the most good and minimizes harm for the involved students, colleagues, and their institutions" (Damminger, 2015, p. 55). Simultaneously, there are existing FLC policies and procedures with which Professional Academic Advisors must comply; therefore, we are always incorporating aspects of the Duty framework into our decision-making process. Ultimately, each meeting with each student is a balance between the requirements and desires of all stakeholders.

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