It is difficult to give a brief statement of my advising philosophy. To me, advising encompasses many different responsibilities and it is impossible to capture everything meaningfully in one or two sentences. Nevertheless, there is one overriding philosophy that applies to everything I do that is related to advisement: “Be there for the students.”

When I first decided to pursue a career in academia, I never realized how integral advising would become to my career or how much I would enjoy it. Nevertheless, I quickly learned that advising is directly related to my primary reason for choosing a career in academia. As I state in my “Teaching Philosophy” statement: “As an attorney representing major corporate clients (my career prior to academia), I never felt that I (Steven Abraham qua Steven Abraham) made a difference in anyone's life. In teaching, I often have a meaningful impact on people, and few things give me greater pleasure.” That statement applies to advising even more than to classroom teaching, since much of my advising consists of one-on-one interactions between students and me.

Part of my advising philosophy is that I consider myself an advisor to more than the students officially assigned to me as “advisees” by BASAC (the school of business advisement center). As a faculty member, I consider it my responsibility to advise all students if my advice is solicited and if I have something constructive to contribute. I am honored whenever a student solicits my advice on something and I do my best to give him (her) the best advice I can. For example, several students each semester contact me and ask me to look over their schedules because they want my input on their course selection. Further, whenever students ask me for reference letters, I try to speak to them about their future plans in the hope that I can help guide them into making appropriate choices.

One thing I have learned through advising over the years is that advisement involves more than helping students pick classes. Students often need advisement in many areas related to academics (e.g., choosing a major, selecting courses, developing strategies for succeeding in classes, deciding what to do after graduation, etc.). In addition, they often need advice concerning non-academic issues as well (e.g., difficulty with roommates, problems at home, relationship issues, financial concerns, etc.). To me, advising involves interacting with students about all of these issues. This does not mean that I can “solve” every issue students raise. I’ve also learned that I cannot and should not address every issue raised by every student. As much as I’d like to be able to help students with every concern they decide to raise with me, it often makes more sense for others to address students’ issues with them. To me, one of the most important attributes of an effective advisor is knowing which issues to address with students, which issues to refer to others (and to whom to refer the student).

When it comes to academic issues, I should be students’ primary resource person. There are many rules, regulations and procedures applicable to students at Oswego and it is my responsibility to be informed, knowledgeable and current about all of them. In addition, I try to stay informed about career opportunities/trends, graduate school programs and other things that will help students navigate their careers in Oswego and afterwards.
Perhaps the most important thing I try to do as an advisor is *listen*. Many students never even consult their advisors or merely want a form signed, etc. If a student comes to me for something, it means that the student has needs that (s)he thinks I can help meet. In my mind, I cannot help the student unless I am fully aware of the student’s needs, and I can only become aware of those needs by listening. Listening involves simple things like being in my office often (I even have candy on my desk to make my office more inviting), giving my email address to students, stopping to talk to students in the hall or after class if they approach me but it also involves more subtle things like looking at them when they speak to me, concentrating on their words,

As I’d suspected it would be, I found it difficult to give a brief statement that would capture my entire advising philosophy. Nevertheless, the phrase “be there for the students” is one of the fundamental premises behind my advising and I try to apply that conviction to everything I do at Oswego. Advising is extremely important to me because students are extremely important to me. Therefore, I strive to be the best advisor I can be and will continue to do so.