ADVISING AT COLUMBIA

The Center for Student Advising (CSA) guides and supports students at Columbia College and Columbia Engineering as they navigate their educations and lives at Columbia University.

CSA advisers (1) help students recognize and pursue their passions; (2) challenge students to set realistic academic and life goals to ensure personal success; and (3) empower students to think and act creatively and independently.

Students are expected to engage with their CSA advisers to form partnerships that will help them become the best possible versions of themselves.

THE CSA VISION
We will be a trusted and indispensable source of knowledge and support for all students and a widely emulated model of advising excellence across the nation and around the globe.

CSA ADVISERS
CSA advisers represent diverse educational and professional backgrounds that complement the interests, goals, and backgrounds of our student population. The Center for Student Advising works closely with offices across the Columbia campus to create an integrated advising experience for students as they grow intellectually, socially, and professionally at Columbia.

THE ADVISING PARTNERSHIP
Productive advising is built on a true partnership in which the student and the adviser work together. The spirit of an ideal advising partnership is mutual engagement, responsiveness, and dedication. Regular advising conversations, the fundamental building blocks of the partnership, enable an adviser to serve as a resource of knowledge and a source of referrals and allow students to plan and prepare, in the broadest sense, over the course of their years at Columbia.
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EXCEPTATIONS
To make the advising partnership a success:

Students should:
- Actively engage in the advising relationship
- Respond to adviser outreach and be forthcoming about perceived obstacles to success
- Proactively research and plan ways to reach academic goals and be open to sharing these goals with their advisers
- Be open to researching the answers to questions with advisers in order to learn ways in which to find information on their own
- Act upon referrals to other sources of information and advice
- Let advisers know when they have not been able to find information and advice they need

Advisers should:
- Be knowledgeable, responsive, and supportive
- Reach out to advisees, especially when an advisee seems to be struggling
- Inquire about students’ short- and long-term goals and ask students to consider studying abroad, fellowships, scholarships, internships, research opportunities, etc.
- Research the answers to questions with students as a way to show students how and where to find information on their own
- Refer students to other sources of advice and information and connect advisees with appropriate faculty members and departments
- Follow up with students on important matters in a timely way.

GENERAL ACADEMIC ADVISING

HOW IT WORKS
Prior to arrival, advisers reach out to incoming students in a number of ways. In August, each first-year student is assigned an adviser who will contact them before they arrive on campus. From their first semester to graduation, students are encouraged to meet regularly with their advisers to discuss anything from life goals and aspirations to course schedules and graduation requirements. With this foundation, students can build an enduring and meaningful advising relationship with one or more advisers at the Center, in their academic departments, and across campus.

In addition to individual advising, CSA advisers also work with unique cohorts of students. Engineers are assigned an adviser who specializes in their major of interest. Transfer, combined plan, and visiting students work with a small group of advisers, allowing them to create a sense of community and address common questions and concerns. Each athletic team is assigned its own adviser, so that athletes share a common adviser with their teammates. Preprofessional advisers in the Center also serve all students interested in health and law professions. Working with distinct cohorts of advisees builds a sense of camaraderie and affords students the opportunity to partner with advisers with high levels of expertise.

WHAT WE DO
CSA advisers support students throughout their time at Columbia. From course selection to graduation preparation, students turn to CSA advisers as a first point of contact for any and all questions. The CSA helps students understand University policies and graduation requirements, refers students to other resources on campus, and works with students to help them align their academic interests and life’s passions. In addition to thousands of individual appointments each year, advisers present a number of programs designed to help students think about their major, declare a major and/or concentration, review their degree progress, and conduct special advising of various sorts. Advisers strive to be proactive in their advising partnerships with students, opening clear, reciprocal lines of communication and encouraging their advisees to anticipate upcoming events and deadlines.

The Center for Student Advising contains several specialized entities, including:

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT LIAISONS
The Academic Department Liaisons group aims to enhance and extend the CSA’s relationships with all Columbia schools, academic departments, centers, programs, and faculty across the University.

MAJOR DECLARATION
The CSA works with the academic departments to teach prospective majors about the breadth of academic fields open to them and to support students as they make informed decisions about which academic areas to pursue.

ADVISING SPECIALTIES
The Advising Specialties group provides support and advising to transfer students, visitors, international students, and participants in the University’s extended opportunities, including the 3-2, 4-1, and 4-2 Combined Plan programs and the SIPA, Juilliard, and Kluge Affiliates programs.

TRANSFER STUDENTS
The CSA provides special advising for transfer students to ensure the appropriate transfer of credits, a smooth transition to Columbia, and the timely completion of the degree.

JUILLIARD
All students who are dually enrolled through the Juilliard program work with one adviser to manage their unique academic and scheduling needs.

3-2 AND 4-1 COMBINED PLAN PROGRAMS
Advisers work closely with students who wish to earn bachelor’s degrees from both Columbia College and Columbia Engineering through our five-year programs. They also support 3-2 Combined Plan students who are completing a degree at Columbia Engineering after having completed course work at their original institution.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
The Community Outreach group creates programs, publications, and collaborative initiatives that enhance our knowledge base, deepen our partnerships, and foster a transparent, informed, and seamless advising experience for our students.

SUMMER ADVISING
Summer Advising is a program that is unique to Columbia, in which advisers travel around the globe to welcome incoming Columbia College and Columbia Engineering first-year and transfer students and their families to the Columbia family. Advisers, current students, and parents discuss academic advising, campus life, support services, orientation, and anything else on the minds of students and parents, after which alumni present each incoming student with a gift.

ADVISING AT COLUMBIA
NSOP ADVISING
During the New Student Orientation Program (NSOP), advisers meet individually and in groups with incoming students to begin the advising relationship, discuss proposed course schedules, and answer any questions from students.

CLASS-YEAR PROGRAMMING
The CSA hosts programs for students in all four years of study, designed to assist them as they reach the academic milestones of their college career: declaring a major, reviewing their degree audit report to ensure appropriate progress, applying for graduation, and more.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAMS (ASP)
Academic Success Programs (ASP) provides a comprehensive network of supportive programs and services, including transitional programming, skill-building seminars, personal advising, and mentoring programs that support program participants throughout their college experience.

The CC/CE Tutoring Service provides tutorials and skills-based workshops to students who desire additional academic support services. Collaborative partnerships with academic departments, other offices within Student Affairs, outside organizations, agencies, businesses, and alumni, work to enhance ASP’s educational services to students.

COLUMBIA UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARS PROGRAM (CUSP)
The Columbia Undergraduate Scholars Program (CUSP) provides scholars named upon admission with enhanced academic and cultural opportunities, including faculty and peer mentoring, research and internship programs, and on- and off-campus activities, all designed to enrich the scholars’ college experience and foster the intellectual, social, and cultural growth essential to future leadership.

PREPROFESSIONAL ADVISING
Preprofessional Advising helps students and alumni refine their interests in professional school—law, medicine, and other health professions such as dentistry, veterinary medicine, and public health. Preprofessional advisers offer dozens of informational programs and provide one-on-one guidance and support throughout the professional school application process.

ASSESSMENT
The CSA engages in a constant process of assessment to improve and refine advising services and programs. The results of the 2010–2011 CSA Survey, completed by then current Columbia College and Columbia Engineering students, reflect the Center’s success in establishing itself as a valuable campus resource:

- 95% of students agree that the CSA is a comfortable place to hold advising conversations
- 84% of students know who their adviser is
- 73% of students agree that the Center is meeting their academic advising needs
- Students say their adviser is
  - Knowledgeable about the curriculum (86%)
  - Approachable (91%)
  - Supportive (88%)
  - Responsive (89%)

CSA HISTORY
The current CSA represents the culmination of a long evolutionary process in the advising structure at Columbia. In 1998, four advising centers were established, one for each year of a student’s education; each adviser worked with approximately 450 students. The four class centers merged into two in 2002, one for first years and sophomores and the other for juniors and seniors. In 2007, the two centers became one, the Center for Student Advising. For the first time, students were assigned the same adviser for all four years. However, advisers were still spread across five separate locations and each one advised 300–350 students. In 2008, advisers developed special advising roles with each of the nine Columbia Engineering departments. In the summer of 2010, the CSA opened its new home in 403 Lerner Hall, a state-of-the-art facility that unifies all CSA advisers under one roof, offers multi-use spaces for student groups, and creates a warm, inviting place to nurture the advising partnership. On average, advisers now welcome approximately 60-70 new advisees per academic year.