

Suggested Agendas for Meetings with Students

Questions to help you get to know your advisees

Tell me how you ended up coming to the University of Rochester.

What are your interests and hobbies? What work experience do you have so far?

What activities would you like to participate in while you're in college?

Tell me what kinds of goals you have for this semester/your first year of college.

Are there specific courses or majors that you are considering?

Have you thought about studying abroad?

Are there any concerns or worries about college that you would like to share with me?

Tell me about some of the challenges you've experienced thus far.

What kinds of questions or interests would you like to explore in our follow-up meetings?

Questions for students who are selecting courses for the next term

Tell me about the courses you are considering so far.

What interests you about these courses?

How do these courses complement your academic strengths?

If you are interested in [course or topic], have you also thought about [related course]?

Have you taken a look at the prerequisites for [course name]?

How do these courses fit into your goals for this year?

Have you considered taking a course that explores some entirely new terrain for you?

Did you know that course evaluations are available at UR Access *Plus!* in case you would like to learn more about the courses you are considering?

Questions for students who are undecided about their major

What classes did you enjoy in high school and thus far in college?

Is there a particular work setting that you can see yourself in?

What major or majors are you considering, if any?

What other information do you need about these majors?

Have you thought about the courses that are required (for these majors) and how they match with your interests and abilities?

Do you have any concerns about how your choice of major might impact your ability to get a job or develop a career? (If so, have you visited the Career Center or might it be helpful to complete a career or interest inventory?)

What resources (offices and people) can you talk with to learn more about these major(s) or possible careers?

Would you like to return to my office in (two weeks? Three weeks? End of the semester?) for a follow up meeting so that we can discuss what you learned?

Questions for students who have had academic difficulties

Why do you think you are on probation (or have had academic difficulties?)

Tell me about how you typically tackle a homework assignment.

What is your working relationship like with your instructors and teaching assistants?
How about with other students?

What do you think of your time management skills?

What kinds of things could you do to help you become a better student?

Are there specific resources or services that you are interested in learning more about?

Is there anything you would like to share about yourself that would help me better advise you?

Questions for students who seem to be having emotional difficulties or are in distress

Let the student know that you've noticed that s/he appears to be feeling down or isn't her/himself and that you would like to help. (e.g., "It seems like something is bothering you. Would you like to talk about it?")

Ask and encourage students to talk (e.g., "I would like to hear about how you are doing.")

Offer support and concern about the student's well being. (e.g., "I want to be helpful if things are bothering you right now.")

Offer options to further help the student manage his/her feelings. (e.g., "It's often helpful for students to talk to someone in the Counseling Center. Would you like me to help you make an appointment?") Then offer to call UCC from your office so that the student can schedule an appointment over the phone.

Avoid offering solutions to help the student fix his/her problem. It's better to listen, provide reassurance and let the student know that you care about how s/he is feeling. (e.g., "It's hard to focus on being a student when you are having difficulties.")

If you are concerned that the student is suicidal, be direct. Ask the student if s/he is thinking about harming her/himself. Take the student seriously. 80% of suicides give warning of their intent. Help the student make an appointment or walk the student to the counseling center. Do your best to make sure that the student actually receives help from the Counseling Center.

Be sensitive to the student who appears to have "checked out" or may have stopped attending classes. Say, "I'm sorry you're having difficulties. Would you like to tell me about what's going on?" Avoid lecturing or scolding the student (as in, "You should have replied to my emails when I wrote to you").

--Adapted from University Counseling Center, "Helping Distressed or Distressing Students at <http://www.rochester.edu/ucc/facultystaff/index.html>