

Appreciative Advising

Supporting Honors Students

What is Appreciative Advising?

Appreciative Advising is the use of positive, open-ended questions to draw out students' strengths, skills, goals, and passions. It emphasizes the importance of building a trusting relationship between the advisor and student and also incorporates the use of goal setting, planning, and encouraging students to reach their full potential (Bloom, Huston, & He, 2008).



How can I use this technique in my work with students?

Through the use of Appreciative Advising, we can help students identify their strengths and preferences and assist them in translating that information into action toward achieving their goals and dreams. Below I have summarized each stage of Appreciative Advising and provided some questions that can be used in each stage to prompt thinking, discussion and action.

The first phase is **DISARM**. Create a safe and welcoming environment by eliminating distractions and focusing solely on the student. This phase involves making a positive first impression and building rapport. This stage continues throughout the advising relationship to allow collaboration and trust to develop, making space for students to reveal their ambitions and feel supported in pursuing them.

The purpose of the **DISCOVER** phase is to draw out what students enjoy doing and identify their strengths, skills, passions, and accomplishments. Questions to use during this phase can include:

- What do you consider your greatest accomplishment? Why?
- Tell me about an activity that you performed in the last week that left you feeling energized and motivated.
- Tell me a story about when you felt at your best.

The **DREAM** phase allows advisors to work with students to develop visions for their future and formulate their career and educational goals. Questions to use during this phase can include:

- If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?
- When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? What do you want to be now?
- What is your ideal type of work environment?

The **DESIGN** phase focuses on assisting students to create plans and concrete, incremental, and achievable goals that allow them to attain their dreams. Questions to use during this phase can include:

- What could you do this week to help you reach one of your goals?
- What activities do you think will enhance your learning and future goals?

During the **DELIVER** phase, students follow through on the plans they made during the Design phase. The advisor's role is to support and encourage students through this phase, helping them continue to update and refine their dreams and plans along the way. Honors students should be encouraged to explore opportunities before making commitments. Advisors should reiterate their confidence in the student's ability to accomplish the plan laid out in the design phase. Questions to use during this phase can include:

- How and when will you keep me updated on your progress?
- What will you do if you run into roadblocks?
- What will you do if you think your goals may be changing?

The last phase of Appreciative Advising is **DON'T SETTLE**. Advisors should strive to support and challenge students to continually raise their internal bar of expectations while maintaining balance. Advisors have a chance to teach students how to find a balance and how to reach out for assistance if they find themselves becoming either complacent or overwhelmed. Questions to use during this phase can include:

- You have done great so far, but what is one thing that you could do even better?
- If you were going to raise your own internal bar of expectations, what would that mean?
- What would happen if I challenged you to become the best you that you could possibly become? What would you need to do differently?

References

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