

January 2015

## Message from the Chairman



*A comprehensive academic advising system requires attention at different levels in the University, from individual teacher, Faculty, and student residential halls. I believe all of us have been working very hard in serving as the Faculty Academic Advisers (FAA) or in other capacities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all colleagues for their continuing support to the academic advising initiatives.*



*Personally I consider academic advising to be part of teaching rather than administrative duties. The advices given may affect students' decision on their academic plan. It is also a process from which students are empowered to make their own decisions on their studies. It constitutes a critical*

*component in students' learning experiences. To us, it is also a good way to build a more personal relationship with our students. Our efforts and time spent are appreciated by them.*

*At times, academic advising can be a challenge to us as the curriculum structures in different Faculties are very diverse. We understand that the advising system needs further refinement given the fact that our curriculum and regulations are being updated from time to time as well. The Academic Advising Office (AAO) was set up to help co-ordinate the implementation of the academic advising system across the University, and to be available to meet and help students whenever necessary. This year, AAO will organize various workshops/sharing sessions so that some good practices and difficulties encountered by teachers can be shared. Please stay tuned.*

*We look forward to hearing more about your experiences with the academic advising system and your advisees.*

Prof. Wai-kin Chan  
Chairman, Academic Advising Committee



### contents:

■ **Welcoming Messages**

Page 1

■ **Feature**

*Relationship-Building in Academic Advising*

Page 3

■ **Voices from Around Campus**

*The Common Core at Work: Building Relationships Across Campus & Beyond*

Page 5

■ **What Do Students Say about Advising ?**

Page 6

■ **Adviser Resources**

Page 8

■ **What's Happening?**

Page 10

# Message from the Deputy Chairman



*Academic advising has always been part of our job as teachers, but with the implementation of the new undergraduate curriculum two years ago it also became central to the University's vision of teaching and learning. The new curriculum offers students a much wider scope of choice and combination among programmes and subjects, along with increasing opportunities for experiential learning and studying abroad. Our expanded campus also offers room for a growing range of extracurricular activities, learning environments and support services. Posters, flyers, bulk emails and campus television announce new events daily, while deadlines huddle together near the end of term and any deviation from the curricular path requires the completion of the relevant form. This makes it challenging, especially for first-year students, to find their way through a maze of directions, to prioritize, balance, and not simply ignore the many messages jostling for their attention.*



*As academic advisers we play a vital role in this environment: our meetings with students are often among their very first personal contacts with the University and an opportunity to discuss their impressions, aspirations and concerns with a teacher. Our conversations can help them make connections and deliberate decisions among a diversity of options and requirements.*

*Needless to say, this is challenging for us advisers too, not least because we often know no more than the students about options and requirement outside our particular department or programme, and in striving to be good advisers, we inevitably learn more about the environment in which we ourselves teach. Trying to help make students comfortable in a new institutional context may take us a little out of our own comfort zones, and that's a good thing. Academic advising, these past few years, has helped me see teaching and learning at HKU a little more from students' perspective.*

*In this task, I've come to greatly appreciate and rely on the resources and support provided by the AAO as well as my home faculty. Academic advising fosters the development of learning communities and this newsletter is intended to stimulate interest, introduce new features, and invite exchanges of experience and suggestions for improvement. I hope you will find it informative and will share with us any ideas on how to do academic advising at HKU even better.*

*Dr. Otto Heim  
Deputy Chairman, Academic Advising Committee*



# Relationship-Building in Academic Advising

The academic advising system at HKU emphasizes the construction of learning relationships especially for students in their first year of study. This complements the developmental academic advising model by building a collaborative learning relationship between the adviser and advisee. These relationships and positive interactions reinforce to students their roles and responsibilities within the academic community and help ease the transition to University life, ultimately promoting student success.

Basic Steps to Building Advising Relationships:

## 1. Establishing Rapport



As with any new relationship, the first step is to establish rapport with your advisees. This will help set the foundation for developmental academic advising and subsequent learning experiences to take place. Each advisee will bring his own academic history and personal experiences to the learning relationship. In the first advising session, consider engaging your advisee in discussion by asking questions about his background, sharing about your academic career, or facilitating an activity such as an academic journey timeline. A friendly smile and meeting in a less formal setting will definitely help. Taking some time to get to know your advisee before diving directly into academic matters shows that you care. When advisees sense that you care, they care more about the advising experience and learning process too.





## 2. Actively Communicating

Academic advising evolves through a process of exploration and discovery. It requires active communication between the adviser and advisee. When possible, meet with your advisee in-person. Engage in the advising relationships by asking open-ended questions and listening attentively. Remember that students might ask a different question than the one they really want answered. For example, an advisee might ask you whether he should consider adding a minor to his programme of study; what he might want to discuss is how to take his studies and future goals in a new direction. You can get to what is behind many simple questions with follow-up questions and conversation.



## 3. Maintaining the Relationship

Keeping the advising relationship going does require some maintenance. You might consider sending out email of encouragement to your advisees at certain points in the academic year (e.g., revision period), scheduling advising office hours, or developing an online platform (e.g., blog) to continue communication with all of your advisees. It is often these small reminders that help a student in becoming comfortable with the advising relationship as well. Consider that a great advising relationship is mutually beneficial. Advising can be a meaningful learning experience for the adviser too. Advisers will often learn more about the student perspective, reflections on themselves, and various campus resources and facets of the University.

### Further Resources

- *Developing Trusting Relationships in Academic Advising: A Review of the Literature with Recommendations for Practices*
- *Academic Advising for the 21st Century: Using Principles of Conflict Resolution to Promote Student Success and Build Relationships, NACADA*
- *Opening the Doors to Trust in Advising, The Mentor*
- *Building Relationships through Academic Advising*

Katherine Wan  
Head of Academic Advising Office

## The Common Core at Work: Building Relationships Across Campus & Beyond

The Common Core (<http://commoncore.hku.hk/about-us/>) focuses on building relationships between important ideas and disciplines, between students across Faculties, between students and their tutors and professors, and between the campus, the city, and beyond. It creates synaptic leaps between, among many others, art and physics, globalization and fashion, health and cities, and mobile phones and politics.

Faculty Academic Advisers (FAA) and the newly formed Common Core Student Ambassadors are good examples of this relationship-building. The Student Ambassadors, who come from all Faculties and from first-year students through alumni, provide essential advice to us about how to improve the student experience of the Core. And, since the FAAs are in direct touch with the students about how to plan pathways for courses, co-curricular involvements, and patterns of living beyond their studies, they provide a key link to the work of the Core.

The major work of the FAA, in this context, is to share the spirit of the Common Core as it builds student capacities across disciplines and skills for different types of learning. How can the Core best coordinate and connect ideas, sites, and activities? How can it best serve the more specialized learning of the majors (and vice versa)? How can it open

up the vastness of the exploratory mind? How can it best prepare students for a very flexible and mobile workplace? The Core has active partnerships with all the Faculties, its teachers and students, other co-curricular units on campus, and sites for learning in the city and around the world. At every turn, the Common Core works to establish points of connections across all of our experiences.

Please let us know how we can help strengthen learning and enhance the student experience of the Core! You can reach us at: [commoncore@hku.hk](mailto:commoncore@hku.hk). To find out more about the academic requirements of the Common Core Curriculum, refer to <http://commoncore.hku.hk/programme-requirements-2014/>

Prof. Gray Kochhar-Lindgren  
Director of Common Core Curriculum



## What Do Students Say about Advising?

I would like to be assigned an adviser who could help me understand the University life like hall residence and club societies, not just purely for academic.  
(Faculty of Education)

I am still deciding in what career or academic path I want to choose, I believe the advisers could take more active roles in communicating and providing resources and references to us to support our concerns.  
(Faculty of Business and Economics)

I have encountered a very good academic adviser.  
(Faculty of Law)

Teachers and professors are being very supportive.  
(Faculty of Arts)

Academic advising is one of the best experience for me.  
(Faculty of Science)

## What Do Students Say about Advising?

I believe that HKU can improve the academic advising system, especially for the programme with lots of students. I am happy with that since my department is relatively small, but from the feedback of my schoolmates from other Faculty they might not have a chance to have a comprehensive talk with their advisers.

(Faculty of Medicine)

I am grateful to have such great support provided by the Faculty and University advisers.

(Faculty of Education)

The professors are outstanding mentors. They have helped shape my career choices.

(Faculty of Engineering)

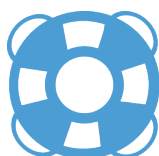
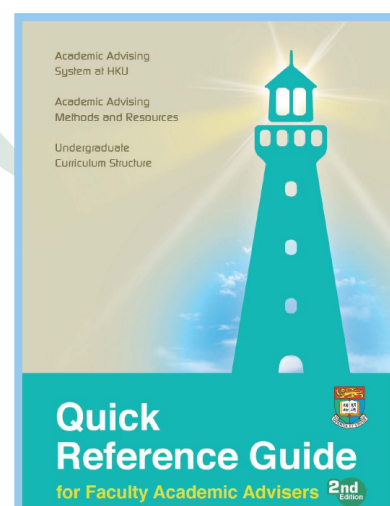
The best part of design studio this semester is having a nice and easy-going tutor/adviser who motivates and encourages me to keep going forward. Even when I'm stuck, he is willing to sit down with me and discuss the solutions that can help solve the problem.

(Faculty of Architecture)



## Quick Reference Guide for Faculty Academic Advisers (2nd Edition)

AAO has compiled the second edition of the *Quick Reference Guide for Faculty Academic Advisers*. This booklet offers easy-to-reference information on academic advising and outlines key issues pertaining to advisers at HKU. An online version is available now (<http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/faa-handbook/>). Hard copies had been distributed to all current advisers through the Faculty Offices in October 2014. Should you also wish to have a copy, please contact our Office.



## Quick Web Link Guide for Advisers - I Want to Help My Students

To assist FAAs with various advising topics, AAO has developed a new online resource page. Popular topics raised by students are grouped under different headings, with quick links to the relevant websites / supporting units. Currently we have three Faculty-specific pages for the Faculties of Business and Economics, Social Sciences and Science, and a general page for other Faculties. (<http://aao.hku.hk/faculty-staff/quick-help/quick-links-faas/>). Please take some time to browse through the guide.

Quick Web Links Guide to FAAs

- I want to help a student explore major / minor options ...
- I want to help a student plan for his studies ...
- I want to help a student register for courses ...
- I want to help a student explore outside classroom opportunity ...
- I want to help a student to improve their study skills ...
- I want to help a student to plan for his career ...
- I want to help a student in applying for ...
- I want to help a student with financial concerns ...
- I want to help a student in crisis ...
- I want to help a student plan for postgraduate studies ...





## New Enhancements in the SIS Advising System

A number of new enhancements in the SIS advising system are in place to further facilitate the work of FAAs.

If you are a FAA and some of your advisees have not made an effort to contact you, please consider sending a reminder to them by using the “bulk email” function in the SIS advising tools. You can also press the “no response” button in SIS for advisees who remain unresponsive. In this situation, AAO will follow up accordingly with the students by phone.

Fung | Home

Academic Advising Office  
The University of Hong Kong

### University-wide Academic Advising System

Advisee Roster [ select all | unselect all ]

ID	Name	Advising Status	Programme	Year of Studies	CGPA	Add Comments	View Comments	Advisee Type
3035038	Chiu		BEd&BSc (4)	2	1.92	Add	--	Academic
2013600	Kit		BEd&BSc (4)	2	2.75	Add	--	Academic
2013575	Ying		BEd&BSc (4)	2	2.60	Add	--	Academic
3035110	Lang		BEd&BSc (4)	2	3.09	Add	--	Academic
3035111	Kwan		BEd&BSc (4)	2	2.41	Add	--	Academic
3035104	Fai		BEd&BSc (4)	2	2.57	Add	--	Academic
3035111	Jeremy		BEd&BSc (4)	2	2.77	Add	--	Academic
3035105			BEd&BSc (4)	2	1.49	Add	--	Academic

No. of advisees: 25

Email Advisees | **Advised in Sem 1** | Advised in Sem 2 | Add Comments | **No Response**

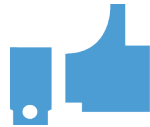
Send bulk email to advisees

Bulk update of advising status

Input of advising notes

Report “no response” students

## Events for Staff



### **Advising for Student Success @ HKU (September 18, 2014, and January 15, 2015)**

To promote academic advising to new teaching staff, AAO participated in a programme organized by the Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL), Introduction to Teaching and Learning @ HKU, on September 18, 2014 and January 15, 2015. AAO's presentation provided new teachers with information about the core values underpinning the academic system at HKU, the essential relationship between academic advising and teaching and learning as well as what teachers could do in support of academic advising.



### **Updates on Academic Advising @ HKU (September 24, 2014)**

To provide updates on academic advising and to encourage sharing of practices, a lunchtime workshop with participation of 30 staff across different Faculties was held on September 24, 2014. The workshop introduced new online academic advising resources for helping students and enhanced SIS advising tools for effectively communicating with advisees. Recent findings from focus groups on students' experiences with the academic advising system were also shared. Moreover, this workshop gave teachers a chance to share their challenges and joys of being an adviser.



Stay tuned to upcoming events via the AAO Website.

## Activities for Students



Each year, AAO organizes training sessions for Faculty Student Advisers (FSAs) and Residential Student Advisers (RSAs) to provide them a foundation to academic advising. Key academic procedures, important University resources, basic skills and tips for student advisers are all succinctly covered.

Apart from student adviser training, a range of activities and workshops were organized at the start of the academic year for students to learn more about their academic choices and to enrich their learning experience. Here is a quick snapshot of these “enriching” moments. A “Major & Minor Fair” will be held in Chi Wah Learning Commons on January 28, 2015 for undergraduate students to explore different Major/Minor options.



**January 28, 2015**  
**"Major & Minor Fair"**  
**for Undergraduate Students**



**February 3, 2015**  
**Residential Student**  
**Adviser Training**



**October 9, 2014**  
**Postgraduate Studies:**  
**To be or Not to Be?**



**September 11, 2014**  
**Faculty Student**  
**Adviser Training for**  
**Faculty of Business**  
**and Economics**



**September 18, 2014**  
**Success Strategies for**  
**the Common Core**



**September 25-26, 2014**  
**Pathfinding Exhibition:**  
**Exhibition on Learning**  
**Opportunities at HKU**  
**(Co-organised with**  
**CEDARS)**



**September 17, 2014**  
**Faculty**  
**Student Adviser**  
**Training for Faculty of**  
**Law**

