Advising Philosophy
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Our greatest human adventure is the evolution of consciousness. We are in this life to enlarge the soul, liberate the spirit, and light up the brain. Tom Robbins Wild Ducks Flying Backwards

I began my career as a teacher, specifically a teacher of writing and linguistics. I see both as ways to develop one’s consciousness, to expand on thoughts and ideas and to express them in different ways. For several years, I taught writing using mythological themes, stressing the universality of shared imagination and the need to see the world from different perspectives. I have always tried to teach as guide, a collaborator with my students, not as an authority who had all the answers, but as a facilitator to help students discover their own ideas, talents, and skills. As I taught, I advised, and when I came to advising as a full-time career, I brought the same philosophy to this.

My advising, as with my teaching, is based on care and responsibility. Most of the students with whom I have worked in my career have been international, often away from their families in a strange and different culture. In addition to wanting to help them be successful academically, I have been committed to supporting them as they negotiate new customs and expectations. I bring the same concern and conscientiousness to domestic students, who are also faced with a different culture when they arrive on campus. If I can show them a friendly face, make a connection, and help them reach their goals, I have succeeded. One of the best moments in my day is when a student says, I understand now or I feel better now.

And, of course, I learn from my interactions with students, as well as with my colleagues. Lighting up the brain is lifelong, and I cherish the knowledge I gain from my students, whether it’s about an aspect of their culture, or something I see in their nature that teaches me about my own. The same is true about what I learn from the professionals in this field or others. I tap into their expertise and insights whenever possible, whether through direct questioning of my fellow advisors or through professional literature or events, and seek to apply what I glean to my advising.