The faculty advising system is a crucial and integral part of an Albright education. The advising process helps you as a student to plan and complete an academic program that satisfies your individual needs and goals. Your advisor can help you to understand the value of a liberal arts education and to explore the relationships among your academic coursework, your personal goals, and the opportunities and responsibilities of the larger world, including the world of work. While academic advisors provide assistance and support to students in planning their academic programs, each student is responsible for ensuring that his or her academic program complies with the degree requirements of the College.

Getting an Advisor. All first-year students are assigned a faculty advisor prior to Fall Orientation, at which time they will meet with that advisor. Advisors are assigned based upon area of academic interest. All students, including transfers and continuing students, have an advisor assigned for each major they have declared.

Students who enter undecided or undeclared are assigned an “Alpha” advisor. Alpha signifies that you are at the beginning of your liberal arts exploration or are otherwise not yet ready to declare a major (Please follow this link for information on the Alpha program.) When a student declares (or changes) a major, he or she selects a faculty advisor from the appropriate academic department. A student goes to the Registrar’s office to declare or change a major or to request a new advisor.

The Advising Relationship. Sometimes the faculty is an under-utilized resource: they are here to help you shape your educational experience, so seek their help with your plans and questions, your successes and difficulties. While all academic advisors assist students in planning their academic programs, including approving course selections each semester, they can do much more than that. For example, advisors help their students to:

- understand the administrative processes and policies of the College
- understand the standards of achievement for and likelihood of success in particular areas of study
- gain insight on educational and career objectives suited to the advisee’s abilities and interests
- learn about research opportunities, internships, study abroad programs, and other academic experiences provided by the College, and the offices that can provide further information
- learn about support resources available, such as tutoring, disability services, and medical and counseling services.
Being an advisee is not a passive role, however. An engaged student is much more likely to be a successful student, and each student is responsible for ensuring that his or her academic program complies with the degree requirements of the College. Your advisor is meant to be a consultant, not someone who takes control of your affairs.

Be intentional about how you plan your four years at Albright, and come to any meeting with your advisor prepared to talk about your plans, goals, and difficulties. Read your College Catalog (http://www.albright.edu/catalog/index.html) for both policies and curricular information – be aware of your course requirements and pre-requisites and understand, as you plan your curriculum, that not all courses are offered every semester.

See the links below for some useful advising-related information, including the checklist titled “Making the Most of Academic Advising,” which offers more information about your role and responsibilities as an advisee.

- **Making Advising Work for You: Your Responsibilities as an Advisee**
- **General Studies and First-Year Seminar** – “General education” coursework is not merely an accumulation of specified courses – it is the broad and developmental foundation of your liberal arts education. The First-Year Seminar is a key part of that foundation. General education goals and requirements are explained in the Catalog (http://www.albright.edu/catalog/academics.html#general). The Seminar’s goals are to:
  - Invite students to experience and value higher education and its academic expectations
  - Cultivate intellectual curiosity as well as creative and critical thinking
  - Introduce disciplinary ways of knowing and their permeable boundaries
  - Develop a sense of the historical development of ideas
  - Cultivate the written, oral, research, communication, and information literacy skills necessary for a productive and educated life.
- **Academic Support Services** – All students are encouraged to make use of the academic services in place to help them succeed. Visit http://www.albright.edu/catalog/academicsupport.html for links to the Academic Learning Center, Writing Center, and Experiential Learning and Career Development Center (ELCDC). You can also visit the ELCDC website for information about study abroad, honors, and undergraduate research opportunities.
- **Academic Standing, Probation, and Dismissal** – See the Catalog for definitions of good academic standing – go to http://www.albright.edu/catalog/academicpolicies.html and scroll down to “Academic Standing.” Students may be placed on probation for low grades or lack of academic progress (six courses per year
is the minimum). Students on scholarship may be placed on scholarship probation if their GPA does not meet the minimum required for their scholarship. If the scholarship minimum is higher than the minimum for academic good standing, this will not affect the student’s academic standing.

If you are having academic difficulty, talk to your advisor and to the staff in the Academic Learning Center. Don’t wait! Students who put off seeking assistance lose valuable time and learning opportunities.

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