

# Recommendation for Reducing Structural Racism

*From the Anti-Racism Action Committee to Chair Michael Oskin  
Department Earth and Planetary Sciences, University of California, Davis*

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**Improved Mentoring:** Writing a Faculty Advising Philosophy

**Proposed change:** Encourage faculty members to publish an advising philosophy.

**Why:** An advising philosophy is a document that lays out an advisor's style, values, and practice of advising. The process of writing an advising philosophy helps the advisor explore their own practice, and the final product helps communicate this important information and expectations to advisees.

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**Purpose:** An advising philosophy is both a mission and vision statement. It is a personal statement of an individual's advising practice. An advising philosophy has the following functions and benefits:

- Articulates the kind of mentoring an advisor provides.
- Provides an opportunity for advisors to reflect on and articulate their values.
- Allows advisors to recognize for themselves and communicate to others their areas of strength and growth.
- Communicates expectations of both advisors and advisees
- Gives structure to advising sessions and relationships with students.

Practical benefits include prompting conversations with potential advisees about advising style, the possibility of increasing recruitment and retention of graduate and undergraduate mentees, and developing a positive sense of community both between advisor/advisee and among groups of advisees.

This proposal is a strong suggestion to faculty members to write an advising philosophy to be posted on their page on the EPS website or any other public space in order to guide their interactions with advisees.

Advisors should promote their advising philosophies as they see fit, including but not limited to during graduate recruitment cycles, graduate student orientation, and undergraduate research mentorships.

This is just one tool of many for developing an effective advising partnership in which all parties set and communicate expectations in an open and respectful manner. Advisors may also consider creating other document(s), in consultation with their advisees, detailing what they can provide and what they expect of advisees, including but not limited to preferred communication styles and expectations on availability.

**Audience:** Advising philosophies are intended to be both a useful professional development tool for advisors and a helpful communication to their current and potential advisees, both graduate and undergraduate students.

**Background:** Faculty have the influence and responsibility to create a positive advising relationship with their students, something that is especially important for students of color (Brunsma et al., 2017). Students of color often report a disconnect with their mentors who can unintentionally harm these students because of comments or actions stemming from “unevolved viewpoints” (Chaudhary & Berhe, 2020). By examining one’s own advising style and expectations, faculty can address these viewpoints and prepare for more effective advising sessions with students of color. Advising philosophies provide the chance to explore and articulate these viewpoints and values, in order to assist in the development of a positive, transparent advising relationship.

**Examples:** An advising philosophy has no template, but may include some of the following information:

- The advisor’s personal qualities
- The advisor’s communication style
- The environment and experience they want to create for their students
- Statements on values, ethics, diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, etc.
- Advising theories, research, and approaches
- Goals for professional growth in advising, plans for meeting those goals, and/or assessment of these goals.

To write an advising philosophy, advisors can begin by brainstorming features of past advising experiences that encompass their advising style. There are some worksheets out there to help with this brainstorming (<http://advisingmatters.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/general/Statement%20of%20Advising%20Philosophy%20Prompts.pdf>). In addition, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising provides many examples and helpful guidelines for creating an Advising Philosophy at <https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Personal-advising-philosophy-examples.aspx>.

**Evaluation:** This proposal is a suggestion for individuals, and therefore will not be systematically assessed by the Department. However, the department may publicize the percentage of mentors who have published their advising philosophies as a recruitment tool. Also, prospective students will be polled to see if these documents affected their view of the department’s mentors or their decision to work with particular individuals.

In addition, faculty members are encouraged to revisit their advising philosophies as they develop as advisors. This self-assessment is a valuable part of professional and personal development. Advisors should consider their personal reasons for writing an advising philosophy, the benefits that emerge during the self-reflection process, and the outcomes of their advising relationships as potential assessment starting points.

**Affordances and Limitations:** Faculty advisors should dedicate the energy required to develop a quality document. This takes time and effort. However, the benefits of an advising philosophy usually outweigh the time spent developing one.

## References

Brunsma, D. L., Embrick, D. G., & Shin, J. H. (2017). Graduate students of color: Race, racism, and mentoring in the white waters of academia. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 3(1), 1-13.

Chaudhary, B., & Berhe, A. A. (2020). Ten simple rules for building an anti-racist lab.

===== The simplified version: =====

## Quick guide: Writing a Faculty Advising Philosophy

### What is an Advising Philosophy?

- A personal statement of your individual advising practice
- Combines a personal mission statement and vision statement

### Why should I write an Advising Philosophy?

- Articulates the kind of mentoring you provide as an advisor
- Reflect on and share your values
- Recognize for yourself and communicate to others your areas of strength and growth
- Communicates expectations of both advisors and advisees
- Gives structure to advising sessions and relationships with students

### What are some things I can include in my advising philosophy?

- Your personal qualities as an advisor
- Your communication style
- The environment and experience you want to create for your students
- Statements on values, ethics, diversity, equity, inclusion, etc.
- Advising theories, research, and approaches
- Goals for professional growth in advising, plans for meeting those goals, and/or assessment of these goals.

### How do I write an advising philosophy?

- Brainstorm features of past advising experiences that encompass your advising style
  - Prompts:  
<http://advisingmatters.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/general/Statement%20of%20Advising%20Philosophy%20Prompts.pdf>
- Think about what inspires you
- Consider your audience. How do you want your students to feel when you advise them?
- Guidelines and Examples from NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising:  
<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Personal-advising-philosophy-examples.aspx>
- Consider this a living document that changes with your experience. Consider revisiting and editing it annually.