

# Where Traditional Meet Non-Traditional:

Tools to Advise the Unique, When You May Not Be

Michelle L. Semski

Academic & Career Advisor, Trocaire College

# Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Why is This Important?
- Advising Environment
- Building Trust
- Conversation Tools
- Follow Through & Follow-Up
- Group Discussion
- Questions

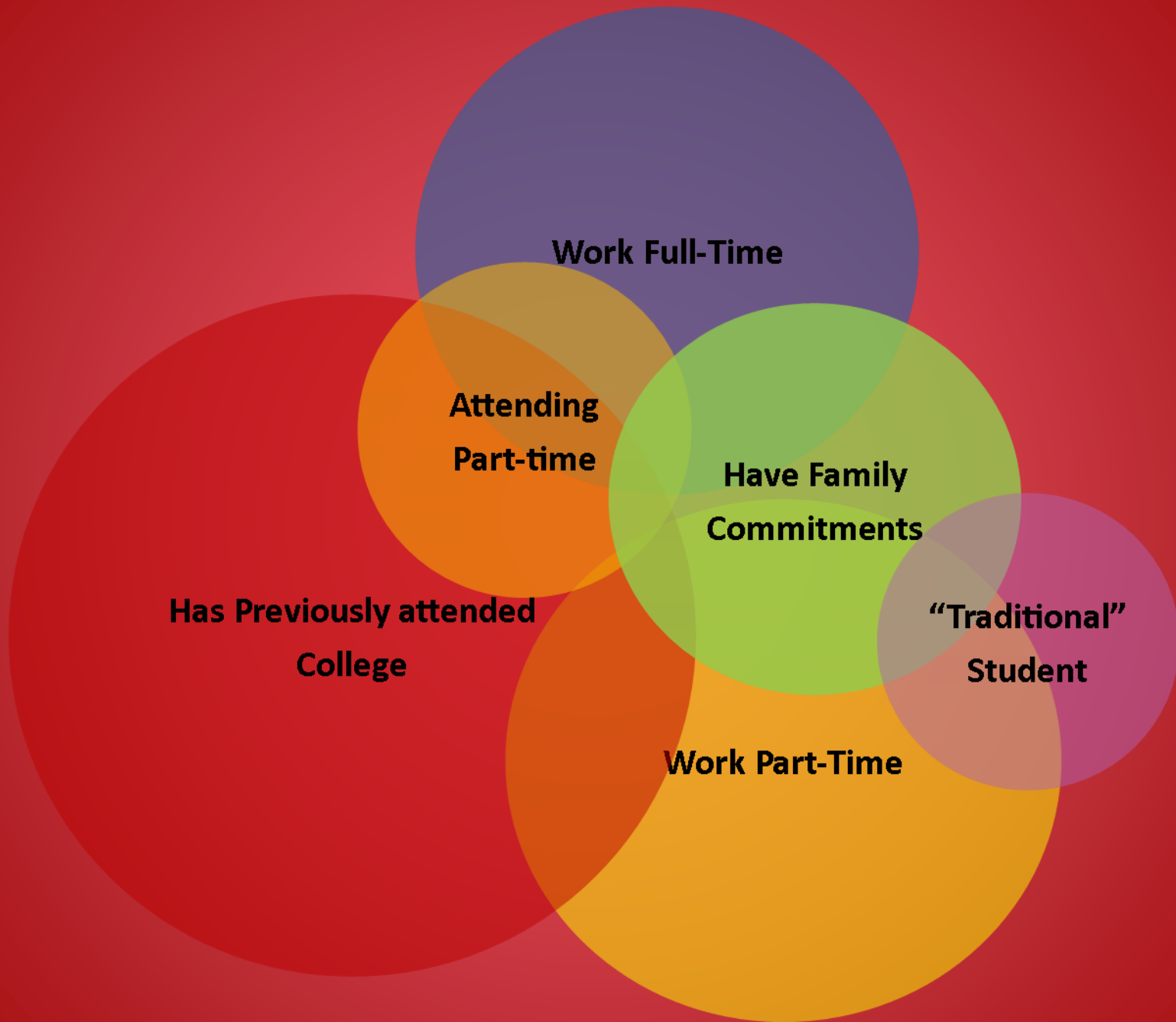
# Introduction: Michelle Semski

- Traditional College Student Career
  - Lived on-campus
  - Graduated in 4 years; Grad School 2 years
- 3 Years – Niagara University
  - Graduate Assistant - Campus Activities
  - Temporary Staff – Campus Activities, College of Arts & Sciences
- 3 Years – Bryant & Stratton College
  - Student Services – Academic Advisor
- Current: Trocaire College
  - Student Affairs – Advisement & Career Services

# Why Is This Important?

- Non-Traditional – any student who is not a first-time freshman, post high school graduate.
- Traits of My Advisees
  - Attended College Previously
  - Work Full-Time
  - Study Part-Time
  - Have Family Commitments
  - Lack Academic Confidence
  - Have Challenging Goals
    - Desire Rigorous Degree
    - Programs/Courses with big time commitments
    - Graduation Timeline
- **Most Rewarding Population to Advise!**





**Work Full-Time**

**Attending  
Part-time**

**Have Family  
Commitments**

**“Traditional”  
Student**

**Has Previously attended  
College**

**Work Part-Time**

**TAKE CHANCES, MAKE MISTAKES,**



**GET MESSY!**

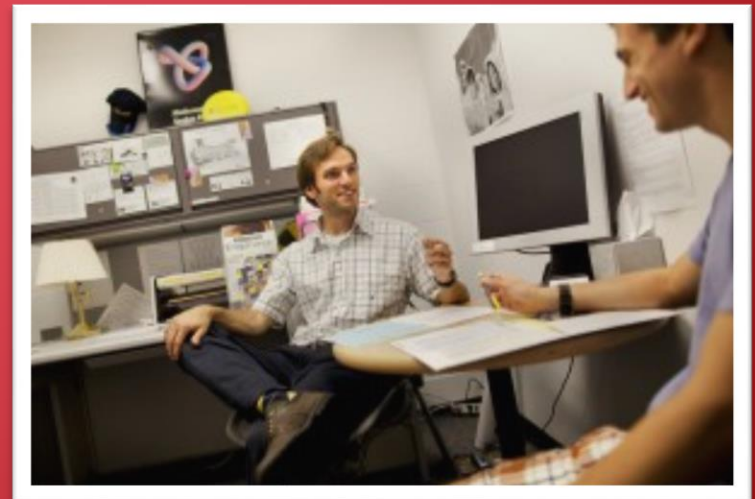


**3.2 G.P.A**

**NOW THERE'S SOMETHING I  
HAVEN'T SEEN IN A LONG, LONG TIME**

# Advising Environment

- What does your space say about you?
  - Desk Décor
  - Conversation Pieces
  - Music
  - Clutter
- Wish list
  - Privacy
  - Clean
  - Resources Readily Available
  - Conversational Set-Up
  - Technology – if needed
- Keep it:
  - Genuine
  - Inviting
  - Flexible





# Building Trust

- Always Introduce Yourself
  - Name & Title
  - Shake Hands
- Goals and Expectations
  - Why are they here? - *“What interests you in a Nursing career?”*
- Discover Strengths
  - Highlight strengths of the student – *“What is your biggest accomplishment?”*
  - Discover new strengths (*Strengthsquest, WOWI, Other Assessments*)
- Offer Encouragement
  - Acknowledge the steps they’re taking to succeed - *“I’m glad you’re here.”*

# Conversation Tools

- **Do not** rely on application information
  - Get the students side
  - They are more than who they are on paper!
- College Jargon
  - There is a lot! (*FAFSA, Part-time, Full-time, Add/Drop, Withdrawal*)
  - Educate don't intimidate
- Flex Your information
  - Serve all learning styles
  - Integrate technology when possible
- Welcome them to the Campus Community
  - Help them with culture norms
  - Clear expectations
  - Locations and terms unique to your campus
- **Be Confident and Comfortable**
  - Know when to call for back-up

# Follow Through

- Genuine interest
  - Ask questions!
  - Look for challenges they may face
- Create Short-term and Long-term plan
- Keep it Real – Keep Your Success
- Encourage Accountability and Organization
  - Homework before next appointment
  - Checklists/To-Do List

# Follow-Up

- Reach out after meeting
  - Summarize appointment with reminders
  - Check-in regarding any referrals
  - Additional Questions
- Keep the Conversation Going
  - Student Engagement
  - Keeps the momentum through courses
  - Be present on-campus
- Promises
  - If you say you are going to do something, do it!

# Group Discussion

- Marva's Story
- What does poor or poverty mean to you?
- Age ain't nothin' but a number!
- Student veterans
- What situations have you (or wished you could have) avoided?



# References

- Peters, Lorenth, MeHee Hyun, Sylvie Taylor, and Jennifer Varney. "Advising Non-Traditional Students: Beyond Class Schedules and Degree Requirements." *Advising Non-Traditional Students: Beyond Class Schedules and Degree Requirements*. NACADA, Sept. 2010. Web. 08 Jan. 2017
  - <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Advising-Non-Traditional-Students-Beyond-Class-Schedules-and-Degree-Requirements.aspx>