

FROM FRUSTRATION TO FULFILLMENT: UNDERSTANDING THE UNDECIDED COLLEGE STUDENT

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Challenges advising undecided students ...

- ❑ Lack of self-awareness
- ❑ Lack career/employment awareness (i.e. options and how to explore them)
- ❑ Multiple interests and skills
- ❑ No clear interests and skills
- ❑ Complex educational and personal histories
- ❑ Uncertain about decision-making techniques
- ❑ Fearful of making the “wrong” decision
- ❑ Short term planners
- ❑ Low self-esteem
- ❑ Lack of motivation
- ❑ Too much or too little parental involvement
- ❑ Emerging Adulthood

Community colleges are the #1 choice for undecided students.

- Affordable
- Under prepared in high school
- Close to home
- Not ready for a four-year college (i.e. maturity, self esteem)
- Parental influence
- Easy application process/rolling admissions
- Accessible faculty and professional staff

Competencies need to advise undecided students

- Understand career decision -making
- Teach decision-making strategies
- Be flexible in your role to them
- Use career related resources
- Make appropriate referrals
- Use good communication skills
- Dispel career “myths”

Gordon's developmental approach to advising undecided students

- Help the student determine why he or she is undecided.
- Help the student organize a plan for exploring.
- Help the student integrate all the information that has been collected.
- Support the student while he or she makes decisions.
- Help the student initiate an action plan.
- Encourage follow-up contact.

The Undeclared Option at Monroe Community College

- Individual academic advisement appointments
- Advisement Center walk-in times
- Liberal Arts Faculty Mentor Program
- Career and personal counseling available in the Counseling & Advising Center and Career Center

The Undeclared Option at Monroe Community College

- Publications (Admissions brochure, parent's brochure, Guide to Major decisions manual, newsletter, mailings)
- College 101 Series: Choosing a College Major
- Workshops (Academic advisement and choosing a major)
- Career Forums
- 30+ hold on student account
- 2+2 dual-admission programs which accommodate undeclared students
- Website/Facebook group
- Career development course: CDL 110

Career and Life Planning for Undeclared Students: CDL 110 (2 credits)

- Objectives of the course
- Units
- Inventories
- Other CDL courses

Training Opportunities for Faculty

- ADV Workshops
 - ▣ ADV 101-Introduction to Advisement
 - ▣ ADV 106 – I don't know how to begin advising
 - ▣ ADV 169- Enhancing Career Advising
 - ▣ ADV 170- Transfer Advising
 - ▣ ADV 200 -Human Developmental Models As Applies to Developmental Advisement
 - ▣ ADV 202 Parents Gone Wild
 - ▣ ADV 203 Understanding the Undecided Student and Techniques for Advisement
 - ▣ ADV 220 Cross Cultural Advising
- Faculty Advisor Handbook
- Academic Advisement Day
- Advisement Center Shadowing

How to assess your own undeclared advising practices

- “Assessing your Advising Program for Undecided Students” from The Undecided College Student by Virginia N. Gordon
- Site visits
- Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Focus Groups

How can you generalize our practices and program philosophy to your campus?

- Examine your current practices
- Conduct assessment
- Decide what takes priority
- Institutional Support
- Clerical Support
- External Support

References:

- Gordon, V.N. (1995). *The Undecided College Student: An academic and career advising challenge, 2nd edition*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Steele, George. (2003). A Research-Based Approach to Working with Undecided Students: A Case Study Illustration. *NACADA Journal*, 23(1&2), 10-20.