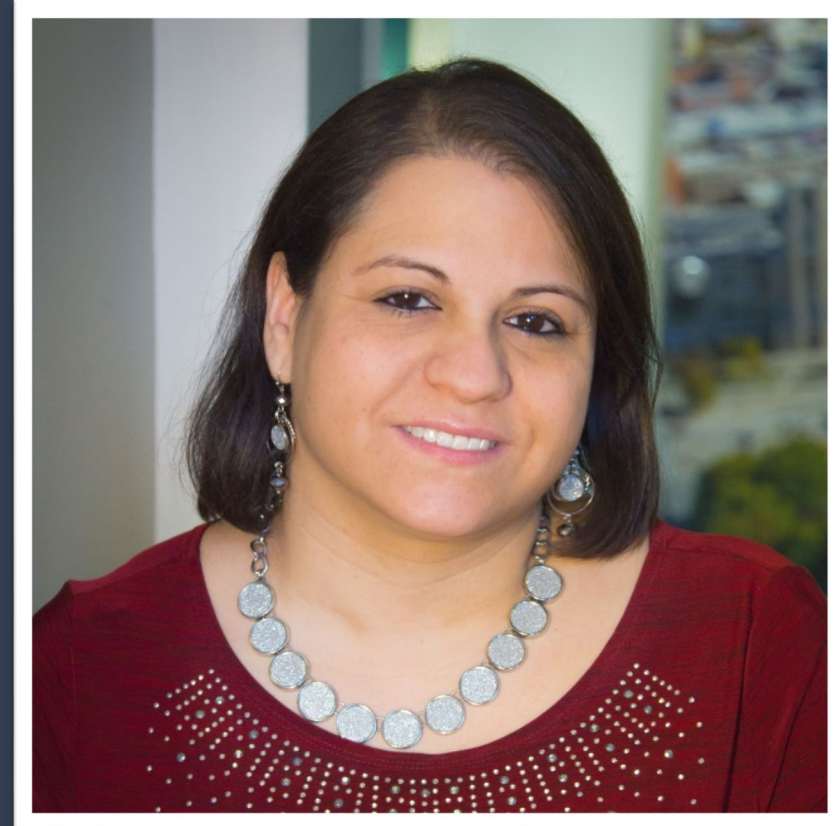# BEST PRACTICES FOR ADVISING STUDENTS

Facilitator
Nikolas Huot

Cindy Firestein

Supporting Adult Learners with an Advising Lens

By: Cindy Firestein, M.Ed., GCDF | Cindy.Firestein@simmons.edu

Director of Undergraduate Advising | Simmons University
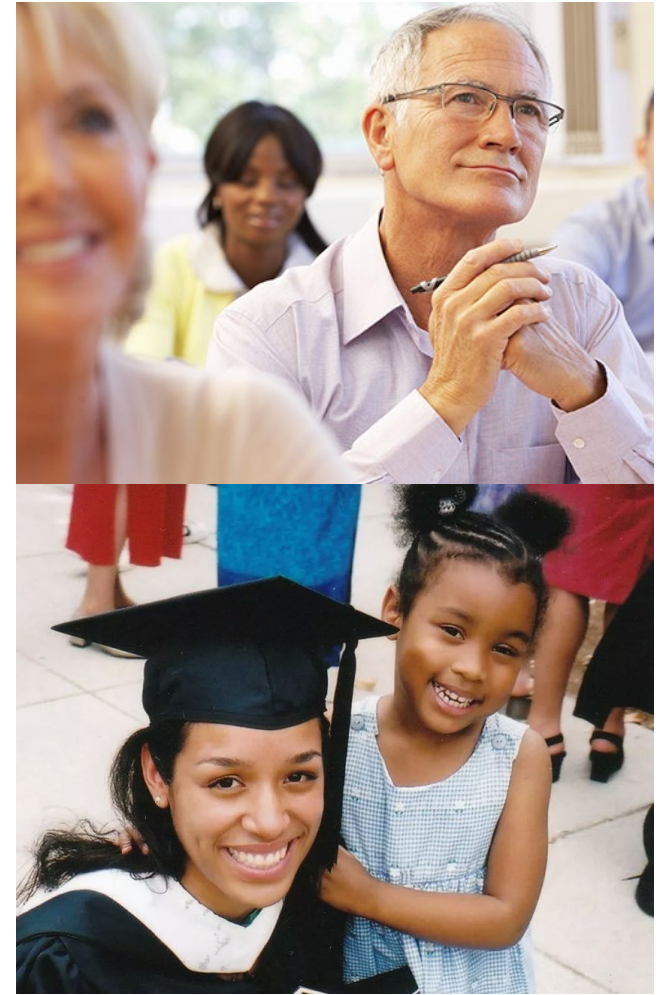
Agenda

- Who Are Adult Learners?

- Data from EAB

- Challenges Adult Learners Face

- Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

- Group Activity

- Staying Connected

- Q & A

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Who Are Adult Learners

- Adult Learners are a diverse population of students who vary in age (usually 24+) and life experiences.

- Common Names of Adult Learners:
  - Adult Learners
  - Non-Traditional Students
  - Adult Students
  - Returning Adults
  - Adult Returners
  - Mature Learners

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Data from EAB

- 1 in 2 adult learners consider online options when researching programs

- 49.6% of 1,000 adult learners said they would change their plans and consider going back to school if tuition was more affordable

Source: *EAB's Adult Learner Survey*
Data posted: February 2019

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Data from EAB

- 61% of adult learners say career or financial factors are their primary reason for enrolling

- Family and work-related commitments are the top enrollment barrier for adult learners

Source: *EAB's Adult Learner Survey*
Data posted: February 2019

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Data from EAB

Total student debt in the United States hit 1.5 trillion dollars in 2018, which amounts to more than two and a half times the sum owed just a decade earlier.

Source: *EAB's Adult Learner Survey*
Data posted: February 2019

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Challenges Adult Learners Face

- Feeling disconnected from classmates and their institution

- Balancing work, family, school, etc.

- Lacking self-confidence

- Not prepared for academics

- Unable to utilize or understand technology

- Cost of tuition / low-income

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Challenges Adult Learners Face (continued)

- Lack of flexibility with their schedule

- Credits won't transfer

- Unable to navigate or access campus resources

- Lack of childcare

- Undiagnosed learning disabilities

- Lack of support at home and/or work

- Moving often due to active military duty

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Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Advising Models

Academic Advising / Support Network

Flexibility for Adult Learners

Technology Tools

Engagement and Community Building

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Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Advising Models

- *Holistic Advising/Coaching*, a developmental process that focuses on the "whole" student.

    - *Developmental Advising*

    - *Intrusive/Proactive Advising*

    - *Strengths-Based Advising*

    - *Appreciative Advising*

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Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Academic Advising / Support Network

- Email each of your newly accepted advisee

- Enroll adult learners into their courses each semester

- Offer evening Advising hours at-least one night a week

- Survey your Adult Learners once a semester and ask them what they need and want to be successful

Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Academic Advising / Support Network

- Referrals to have learning disabilities diagnosed with accommodations made as needed via Accessibility Services

- Hire an Adult Learner as a Peer Mentor to support fellow Adult Learners

- Use a flexible advising model such as Holistic or Developmental

- Listen and help them develop realistic goals to build up their confidence as a non-traditional/Adult Learner

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Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Academic Advising / Support Network

- Encourage Adult Learners to develop a support network at home and on campus

- Family, friends, faculty, classmates, staff, etc.

- Advisors who support Adult Learners should have open drop-in hours during the day and at least one evening each week

- Consider having an open door policy, pending your student caseload size

- Advocate for dedicated individuals who specialize in supporting Adult Learners in campus support offices

Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Flexibility for Adult Learners

- Offer credit for prior learning options

- Accept up to 80 transferable credits

- Support "I" incomplete grades for active military students

- Advocate for evening, weekend, hybrid, online, and summer class options

- Partner with a local daycare to offer child care

- Exempt them from select general education requirements (Ex: language)

Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Technology Tools

- Slides/Presentations

  - Prezi & Powerpoint

- Recording Presentations

  - Panopto & Kaltura

- Creating Fliers

  - Canva

- Animation Presentations

  - Powtoon & Rawshorts

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Supporting and Advising Adult Learners
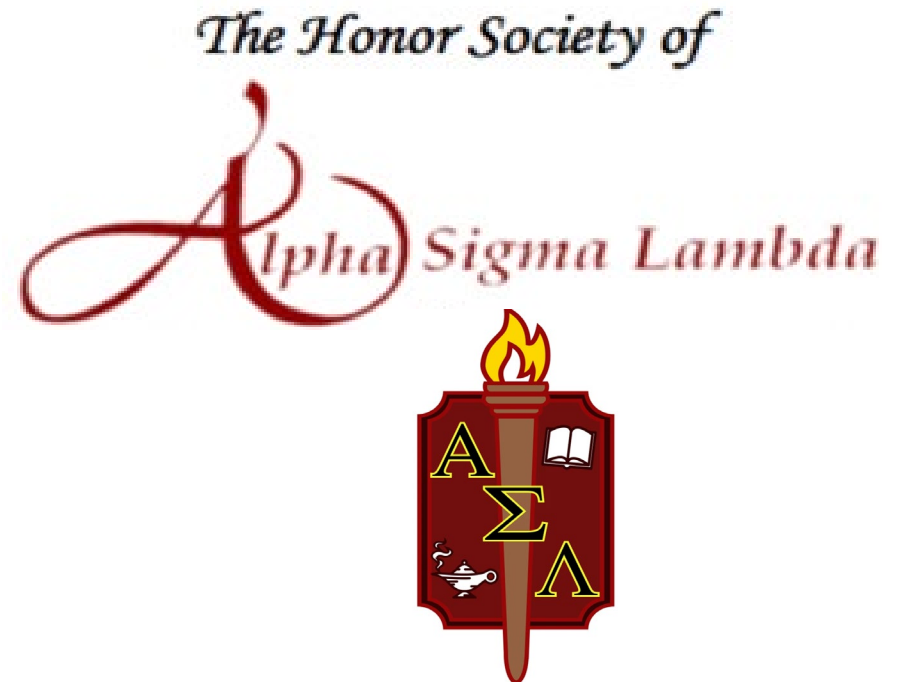
Technology Tools

- Texting/Emailing

  - Persistence Plus, Admin Hub, Signal Vine, Smore, WhatsApp, & Constant Contact

- Virtual Meetings/Classrooms

  - Blackboard Collaborate, Moodle, Blue Jeans, Skype, Go To Meeting, Zoom & Open Voice

- Social Media & Social Media Management Tools

  - Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout Social, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, & HubSpot

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Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Engagement and Community Building

- Adult Learner focused orientation with an online orientation option to provide flexibility

- Create an Adult Learner/Commuter Lounge

- Plan passive events or pre-recorded workshops

- Host Adult Learner appreciation week

- Offer a FAFSA and tax assistant workshop

- Monthly e-newsletter just for Adult Learners

- Establish an Alpha Sigma Lambda chapter

The Honor Society of

Alpha Sigma Lambda

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Supporting and Advising Adult Learners

Engagement and Community Building

- Veteran or Active Military Students
  - Establish a Student Veterans of America chapter or partner with them to sponsor events

- Online Adult Learners
  - Have an online holiday party for your advisees as a way to allow people to get connected in a fun way. Play holiday music, have an ugly holiday sweater contest, and ask them to share their favorite holiday memory.

- Adult Learners who are Parents
  - Plan family friendly evening & weekend events

Group Activity

Get into a small group and take about 3-5 minutes to discuss this question:

If you had unlimited funds, what is one event, program, resource, or outreach effort you would implement at your institution to better support adult learners?

Stay Connected

- Exchange business cards with the person next to you.

- Join the "NACADA Advising Adult Learners Advising Community" Facebook group

- Email the presenter: Cindy.Firestein@Simmons.edu

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Thank You — Q&A

Success isn't about how much money you make. It's about the **difference** you make in **people's lives.**

— Michelle Obama

AZ QUOTES

Support Resources

- *[EAB Adult Learner Survey](#)*

- *[Alpha Sigma Lambda academic honor society for adult learners](#)*

- *[Organizational Models for Advising](#)*

- *[Academic Advising Approaches](#)*

- *[Organizational Models for Advising](#)*

- *[Definitions of Academic Advising](#)*

- *[Adult Learning Theories Every Instructional Designer Must Know](#)*

- *[Schlossberg's Theory](#)*

- *[The Adult Learning Theory - Andragogy - of Malcolm Knowles](#)*

- *[3 Adult Learning Theories Every E-Learning Designer Must Know](#)*

- *[Motivating Factors for Adult Learners in Higher Education](#)*

- *[Millennial Students: Rethinking Time Management](#)*

- *[Student Veterans of America](#)*

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Support Resources

- *EAB Adult Learner Survey*

- *EAB: Adult Student Marketing Blog*

- *Common Factors: A Meta-Model of Academic Advising*

- *Campus Grotto*

- *Teaching Across Generations*

- *The Returning Adult Learner: Advising Strategies to Support Their Degree Completion Efforts*

- *Fresh Ideas to Help Adult Learners Succeed*

- *NACADA Adult Learning Resources via Clearinghouse Advising Adult Learners Community Resources*

- *Southern Regional Education Board*

- *Adult Learning by eLearning Industry*

- *The End of the Remedial Course*

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