CHAPTER ONE

How Honors Advising Is Different

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Like so many Americans, I absorbed new responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. One opportunity proffered by my dean involved devoting time to undergraduates who have temporarily withdrawn from college because of poor academic performance; conflicts between school, work, and family; health emergencies; or financial struggles. Students who leave college prior to finishing their credential or degree requirements are described in the education research literature as stop-out; stopped-out; or some college, no degree (SCND) students. Stop-out suggests an intent to return and—as opposed to dropout—more accurately reflects students' own perceptions, as well as their expectations for the future (Belzer, 1998).

While transitioning to work with these students, I became acutely aware of the value of my two decades of teaching and advising in honors. Stopped-out students are exceptional in many of the ways that honors students are exceptional: stopped-out students' course plans demand serious and comprehensive advising efforts.

Each stop-out has uniquely varied interests and seeks broad-based understandings of the world. Each also wants to acquire advantageous competencies within a custom-tailored pathway. Establishing a clear path to graduation for stop-outs requires matching professional goals with existing coursework and experiential learning opportunities and creating space for personal reflection. Individual plans may involve concentrations, minors, special seminars, or capstones. Degree-related courses for these students tend to emphasize diversity, cultural awareness, creativity and self-motivation, transferable skills, and individual responsibility.

This vision will sound familiar to anyone who has advised in an honors program or college. Honors similarly empowers students to cultivate and direct their own academic and professional interests in ways that foster the ability to comprehend and to contribute uniquely and innovatively to a wide array of topics, questions, and problems. Honors delivers compelling and powerful curricula and activities that prepare students to develop feasible, coherent, and integrated academic plans that combine coursework, research, and non-traditional learning experiences. An honors education encourages introspection, mind-mapping and visualization exercises, vicarious learning experiences through close reading of texts and consultation with authorities, professional development, integrative thinking, and intellectual and real-world independence. The advising moment equally encourages these attributes: introspection, mental visualization, professional development, integrative and diverse thought, and intellectual and real-world independence.

Honors advising is important but sadly undervalued. How else can one explain the many situations in which advisors are responsible for the care and feeding of more than a thousand students? Observers can only conclude that college and university administrators believe that underresourced honors programs and colleges represent a "free lunch" by luring prospective students who are well adjusted and have few academic deficiencies. Now that I am helping stop-outs, I am on the receiving end of comments such as the following: "Finally, you can help the students who *actually* need your help." I would not describe honors advising as an extravagance. Honors advisors are on the front lines: engaging, challenging, and inspiring

extraordinary students. Many also have difficult administrative and teaching roles. Some double as honors program directors. Still, they distinguish themselves as first-rate collaborators: they approach advising in interdisciplinary, integrative, and imaginative ways, and they negotiate a welter of competing motivations, approaches, and practices in service to a wide variety of student outcomes and institutional goals. Honors advising is extremely important, and we should be grateful for advisors' tireless and substantive efforts on behalf of others. Moreover, honors advising is good preparation for all sorts of other academic advising roles on the college or university campus.

HOW HONORS ADVISING IS DIFFERENT

Honors advisors encourage bright, curious undergraduates to encounter a multiplicity of subjects in a variety of ways. They are conscious of academic approaches, methods of perspective taking, and questions of power. Their advising is grounded in epistemological methods and practices designed to help students grapple with and bring clarity to their lives. Their approaches to ways of knowing are rooted in and build interdependencies between what the social scientists John Heron and Peter Reason (1997) once called practical knowing (taking action using acquired skills), presentational knowing (communicating, sharing, and making meaning for others), experiential knowing (directly participating in the activities of the world), and propositional knowing (thinking about and sharing ideas, claims, and theories). New and seasoned advisors may add other elements to this framework that derive from their own personal narratives and academic passions, such as Indigenous or artistic wisdoms, or familiarity with the natural world. Their questions provoke students to think in ways they had not thought before, and they challenge students to grow.

Advisors also demonstrate for students the value of crossing campus boundaries. They show students how to talk across the lines between disciplines and to draw together ideas from across the institution to examine, communicate, and respond to the crying needs and felt difficulties of the world. Honors advisors learn

how to use interdisciplinary and intercultural inquiry to interrogate values and power relations and to bend wise action toward desired outcomes. They demonstrate their value to multiple academic units of the institution by stepping in at critical moments to design, build, administer, and assess intersecting programs.

Honors advisors' methods and practices also effect meaningful social change. They are committed to making a difference by engaging with underrepresented communities and providing meaningful opportunities for all students. The strong and supportive justice focus of advisors' work has only grown in recent years, as has their role in producing the strongly positive results reflected in students' research and scholarship. It makes perfect sense that students who join honors from underrepresented populations and unique perspectives will require more advising time and effort.

The honors advisor's role includes significant responsibility to connect students to other campus and community resources. As connectors, advisors are often the first to identify university stakeholders who can help their honors programs to locate resources, reexamine embattled management structures, and develop new tactics for academic support. Indeed, advisors are valuable sources of leadership and inspiration through their commitment to the highest standards of interprofessional practice. They may have roles on national steering committees that make them responsible for a large share of the growth and continuity of national honors organizations. As lateral thinkers they often find themselves making innovative contributions in a time of profound change for higher education.

Honors advising is different from other kinds of campus advising. Honors advising is special advising, and it is not mundane work. Truly broad in scope, honors advisors are as interdisciplinary as the programs they serve. Honors advisors at their best, explains educator Kathryn Dey Huggett (2004), focus on the big picture and holistic perspective taking. They manage student expectations. They are attuned to the daily rhythms and happenings on campus because of the diverse stream of students with various majors and minors passing through their offices.

Honors advising is also supplemental advising. Honors advisors respond to queries from students, faculty, and staff. They work closely with administrators in a variety of departments. Melissa L. Johnson, Cheryl Walther, and Kelly J. Medley (2018) describe this as "One-Stop Shop" honors advising (pp. 110–112). Because honors is a multidisciplinary community integrating students from programs and colleges of every stripe and flavor, academic planning and requirements vary widely. Honors advisors help students to integrate honors with other curriculum distributions in majors, minors, and concentrations. Some academic departments have majors requiring unique advising interactions. Some programs have extensive lists of scaffolded prerequisites. Other programs have specific professional demands. Building relationships with honors liaisons or champions in other departments is, thus, crucially important.

Honors advising encounters help students to think about and to make decisions regarding their life, education, and career goals. The range of advising interactions can be great. Advisors meet with students who need quick answers ("Help me find a class."); they meet with students who need affirmation ("Did I make the right decision?"); they seek out students who do not visit but should ("I don't know how you can help me."); they advise students who chose the wrong path or feel pressured by others ("My parents really want me to be a pharmacist."); they commiserate with students who reject or play into the cultural Zeitgeist ("I don't need a degree to make money."); they help students who lack direction or are multipotentialites ("Why do I have to choose?"); and they are on the front lines of personal, economic, and health crises ("I feel overwhelmed."). Beyond these moment-to-moment concerns brought to the table by students, it is important to think about honors advising in terms of (a) broad institutional motivations, (b) specific philosophical approaches, (c) actual practices in the field, and (d) goals and outcomes.

Institutional Motivations

Imagine asking a room full of honors advisors, "Why does your position exist?" The responses would be detailed and impassioned.

Honors advisors are often the first point of contact for prospective students and their families. They help to recruit special populations of students to campus that otherwise would not be present. Honors advisors also help their programs manage enrolled students' perceptions of honors on campus as well as the institution itself. They set the tone in their management of co-curricular and student affairs activities. They provide course plans and career counseling that are cross-disciplinary, critical, and intellectually challenging.

A major feature of honors advising these days is enrollment management (i.e., admissions, persistence, and completion). Advisors monitor progression within honors and manage reviews for good standing. They track academic requirements, file course directives, and conduct degree audits. They may also undertake regular surveys of students for program assessment purposes. Proprietary and homebrew tools may be available to honors advisors to help them build and retain unique communities of co-learners, document student successes and misfortunes, and ration scarce academic resources.

Advisors do as much to advance the institution's strategic priorities as any personnel. They address campus climate issues, ensure equity in student outcomes, expand opportunities for community engagement, foster a sense of belonging and inclusion, encourage global learning and high-impact experiences, support student well-being, and prepare students for long-term career success. They are simultaneously challenged by assaults on the liberal arts, the so-called unbundling of higher education, financial constraints, external policy pressures or mandates, and persistent inequalities.

Some of their tasks are truly awesome. Honors advisors engage in capacity building for institutional transformation. They encourage research by students and the development of their expertise. They help their states to reach workforce readiness goals, stanch brain drain, and reach satisfactory post-baccalaureate program enrollments. They grow citizens who enrich their local communities. They nurture alumni referral networks and connections. Honors advisors are crucially important when universities want to take things to the "next level"—whatever that may be. Honors

succeeds in advancing its interests when advisors inculcate universal values like community and empathy for others. Advisors value friendship and fellow travelers. Care and commitment, as well as immersion and collaboration, are of tangible and symbolic importance. They help students to develop personal connections, find their support systems, trust one another, and build intentional communities.

Happiness and life satisfaction rank high on the list of values promoted by honors advisors. We come to college not only to prepare to make a living, but also to learn to live a life. Advisors encourage students to talk about, historicize, and honor the past, contextualize the present, and prepare to take control of the future. As poet Debra Marquart (2002) wrote in "Palimpsest":

> It is possible
> to create a life, doors opening to other
> doors, the fresh breeze of tomorrow
> rushing in to make the world new
> each day. (p. 72)

Philosophical Approaches

Joan Digby (2007) has said that advising an honors student is akin to training a thoroughbred racehorse. Thoroughbreds are spirited and fast but also temperamental and tenderfooted. If honors students are thoroughbreds when they enter our paddock, we should encourage them to be less fragile and more focused when they exit. In truth, if we accept only students exhibiting some native agility and an established work ethic, our programs will be quite one-dimensional. We should want an array of students in our academic stables at both two-year and four-year institutions.

If we assume that advisors are chasing, discovering, and supporting a wide variety of students, it follows that advisors should carry more than one arrow in their advising quiver. Helping students to develop their independent learning attitudes and strategies requires understanding the theoretical frameworks applicable to advising and a broad selection of philosophical approaches. The

three main theoretical frameworks for advising are psychosocial, cognitive-developmental, and typological. The psychosocial conceptual framework views individuals from the perspective of psychological factors and social environments. Students' mental and physical wellness, purpose, and ability to function are understood through this lens. The cognitive-developmental framework suggests that human intelligence changes as we grow. Jean Piaget's (1936) theory of cognitive development includes four stages of intellectual development in children. Honors courses often operate on a level that engages students in a process of cognitive development following the work of psychologists such as William G. Perry Jr. (1970) and Carol Gilligan (1982) and feminist scholars like Mary F. Belenky and her colleagues (1986). The typological framework is not really a theory, but rather a vast collection of ways of measuring and categorizing individuals. One example of a typology is DiSC personality profile assessment; a second is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator; a third, and less well-known example, is Burton R. Clark and Martin Trow's (1966) classification of undergraduates into four categories: collegiate, vocational, academic, and nonconformist.

William James described a person in terms of flow or current. Like a stream, he says, we pool into eddies or curdle at various points in our lives, and we often mistake these curdles for outcomes when in fact they are just spots where we pause and rest (James, 1896). In other words, developmental plateaus are abstractions we pace around that lend solidity to what is really an ongoing process. From the three theoretical frameworks flow several advising approaches and strategies: prescriptive advising, intrusive and proactive advising, developmental advising, appreciative advising, strengths-based advising and coaching, and advising as teaching and learning.

Prescriptive advising is the easiest to understand and the most direct. Here, the advisor is the authority figure dispensing information that students should follow (or ignore at their peril). Honors freshman advising is typically of this kind, in part because the venues for sharing information with new students generally consist of orientation sessions and first-year seminars. Communicating the basics of course plans, check sheets, and honors requirements is

an important responsibility of honors advisors that is often accomplished in the prescriptive mode. This sort of advising is sometimes called involuntary because student attendance is required. Intrusive or proactive advising is somewhat related: it involves deliberate, structured interventions for students who are unlikely to take initiative in accessing advising services. In some places, and particularly where retention rates are low, intrusive advising is the standard academic advising intervention for all students. It is proactive in the sense that it identifies key areas for growth or other unique factors in each learner, discerns when and how to make critical interventions, monitors and documents improvements, conducts outreach and follow-ups, and provides direct support or referrals.

Developmental academic advising is the most written about because it involves integrated thinking, holistic practices, and nuanced performances. A precondition for productive developmental advising is a close, ongoing relationship between advisor and student. It is student-centered and aspirational by nature. It engages the whole student along intellectual, emotional, physical, social, economic, and vocational ranges. Indeed, developmental advising forms the bedrock of institutional student affairs while simultaneously representing an "elusive ideal" (Gordon, 2019, p. 72).

Appreciative advising is a relatively recent model created by Jennifer L. Bloom and Nancy Archer Martin (2002). It is described as an "intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials" (Bloom, 2011, p. 179). Appreciative advising is directed at struggling, probationary, or discouraged students; thus, it is less well known among honors advisors where the pressures of retention are not as great. It may be advantageous, though, where retention rates in honors are low. The focus of appreciative advising is a six-phase core built from organizational development theory, positive psychology, social constructivist theory, and choice theory. Briefly, the six phases help students to relax into the advising encounter, build affinities by directed discussion of student strengths and dreams,

design a plan to "make their dreams come true," deliver on the plan, and develop to the fullest (Bloom & Martin, 2002, n.p.).

Strengths-based advising is similar: it is planning-centered, goal-directed, and optimized by inventories of students' potentials, passions, and skills. Strengths are formed when natural talents are combined with appropriate knowledge discovered in college or unlocked in non-traditional learning experiences. The strengths-based approach leans heavily on the intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy of the student, builds from this original position using positivity, problem solving and success strategies, coping skills, and a repertoire of creative capacities. In application, the strengths-based approach begins from an inventory of a student's current strengths, affirmation of these strengths (in part through awareness), connecting strengths to attainable goals, developing plans for reaching those goals, and considering how strengths can be used to tackle obstructions in their path. The popular CliftonStrengths from Gallup is a commercial example of this approach. CliftonStrengths helps students filter through 34 talents or themes and several domains of leadership strengths. Similar to the strengths-based approach, advising as executive or leadership coaching is inquiry based and quite new to honors education. It focuses on active listening, communication, and reflection (group or self-evaluation), identifying desires and dreams, selecting options, and making persuasive pitches and plans.

Differentiating advising from other services, such as counseling and career planning, is crucially important. Honors advising incorporates elements of telling, teaching, learning, and praxis. Advising as teaching and learning is a diffuse approach that compares the values of the teaching professor to those of the academic advisor. The practitioner in each case asks two questions: What do we want students to learn? And how do we want our students to be different? In advising for teaching and learning, the advisor develops a curriculum that helps students to draft coherent educational plans and assessments of those plans. Advisors identify learning outcomes in ways that mirror the construction of student learning outcomes and develop learning activities to achieve the intended outcomes.

Actual Practices

Access to specialized honors advising is widely perceived as one of the top benefits of enrollment in an honors program or college. Sharing those benefits with students is a responsibility of effective honors advisors. An early advising connection is important. Effective honors advisors build warm, trusting relationships with students. An advisor, through good listening and powerful generative questioning, inspires respect. Despite the pressures of avaricious colleges and universities, honors is not a factory, and the advising interaction is not a commercial transaction. Gleaning insights about students requires mutual empathy, authenticity, and breathing room. Advisors need to get to know the student, and the student needs to get to know the advisor as a person. Paying attention to relationship building will elicit important information not only about students' learning styles and cognitive capacities, but also about their domestic obligations, work responsibilities, and co-curricular involvements.

By encouraging flexibility, advisors help students to develop learner-centered plans that still balance concrete elements with the ability to incorporate options that arise. It is important that they provide truthful, incisive feedback in discussing passions and interests and goals, particularly where they contrast with individual strengths and weaknesses. Advisors also provide recommendations about available resources. They are often the primary conduits to information about scholarships, study abroad opportunities, career training, mental health counseling, tutoring services, résumé reviews, recruiters, and graduate school information sessions. Advisors should provide messaging in multiple formats, including in-person appointments and class visits. Newsletters are also back in fashion. Scheduling advising appointments and office hours in alternative locations may be critically important in reaching students who lead busy lives on and off campus.

Honors advising is also a gateway to academic and soft-skill development. Advisors offer advice, in both didactic and dialogic fashion, on course selection, honors options, contract courses, and independent study opportunities. Not surprisingly, registration is a

particularly busy time of year for honors advisors. Advisors at four-year institutions—and increasingly at two-year institutions—also provide timely introductions to research, faculty mentor interests, and available capstone topics. Advisors help students to choose among different project types; to find mentors; to cope with stress and living situation difficulties; and to manage insecurities, time, and finances. They may offer programming with exercises on study habits, well-being, values clarification, self-reflection, and development of personal narratives.

Honors advisors sometimes have direct classroom responsibilities. They may coordinate first-year seminars or recruit undergraduate teaching assistants. Honors advisors are also sometimes responsible for managing honors councils. Other responsibilities may include coordinating special events such as summer academic camps or community service learning trips. Honors advisors may work with honors students who use alternative entry points or follow secondary tracks into the program.

Articulating a set of honors advising outcomes and mapping those outcomes to overall student learning outcomes are important activities that even the busiest honors programs or colleges should undertake. For example, if we accept, as many honors programs and colleges do, that the role of advising is helping students align their academic goals to values like purpose in life, self-acceptance, global understanding, autonomy, and interdisciplinarity, then advisors should design programming, activities, and assessments that facilitate the efforts of students to understand, practice, and master these foundational elements. Early-stage advising outcomes could include simply helping students to understand the honors curriculum and the role of the faculty. Some progress could also be made in embracing complexity and appreciating diverse communities; or students might grow in their understanding of the importance of developing confidence in their individual paths and an active and independent scholarly identity, including the drive and desire to solve problems and identify questions that intrigue them in their disciplines. Other advising programming could advance identification with honors culture and practices, development of interpersonal relationships, and willingness to engage in campus life.

Specific honors activities led by the advisor are mapped to these outcomes. Activities that build understanding of the honors curriculum might include preparing a curriculum draft or course plan, meetings with honors faculty liaisons in home departments, or sessions where students hear from administrators about the purpose and importance of honors. Embracing complexity and diversity could be advanced in off-campus retreats, special guest lectures, and honors residence hall programming and by informally interviewing faculty members. Developing academic confidence and an active scholarly identity could be advanced in gateway seminars, stories shared by members of more advanced cohorts, and invitation-only gatherings with esteemed scholars or community leaders. In subsequent semesters, students could practice how life-skills training and expertise entail critical reading, writing, professionalism, research and statistical skills, and public speaking. Honors-led workshops and informal clubs, often sponsored by advisors, would also help students grow in these areas.

Who does the advising is an important axiological consideration. Honors advising may be shouldered by administrators, faculty members, professionally trained staff, and peers. It is not unusual for honors students to have two, three, or even more advisors. This variety also brings some challenges: dueling advisors may provide contradictory advice. Peer and collaborative advising has limitations, too. Group and peer advising may gravitate toward the lowest common denominator, perhaps resisting personalization. But in truth, honors advising is everyone's business. Even where there is a professional advisor on staff, that person should be meeting with faculty to learn about expectations and communicate honors values as well as encouraging peer mentorship and constructive interpersonal relationships.

HOW HONORS STUDENTS ARE DIFFERENT

Knowing what an honors student will look like in the 2030s and beyond is uncertain at best. The basic characteristics of an honors student are being questioned as never before. Test-optional, test-flexible, and test-blind admissions processes are taking hold. New,

inclusive definitions are on the table. Invitation-only pathways are being reimagined (National, 2020). Perhaps the only thing we can know with confidence in 2023 about the future is that honors will comprise uniquely selected populations of students on every campus. It might be worthwhile to think not about the characteristics of honors students at all, but rather to consider each of them as a unique bundle of life experiences and potentialities.

Yet stereotypes of honors students abound, and these stereotypes impact students' self-image. Traditionally, honors students are thought of as high achieving and academically motivated. They test well, maintain sterling GPAs, and, because of accelerated tracking, are enrolled in advanced course offerings with compressed timetables to graduation. These students are more likely to seek out the advice and support of their professors, persist to graduation, and pursue admission to post-baccalaureate programs. They tend to be self-directed in their learning, earnest, and curious about the world and a wide variety of subjects. Honors students want to be the lifeblood of their campuses, inspiring community wherever they go. They seek leadership roles in organizations, create new clubs, and attend campus events in great numbers. Their excitement over ideas and new possibilities is palpable.

Honors students have also been defined by less flattering characteristics. They are cautious, introverted, and grade focused. They avoid crowds and teams and the judgment of others. These students are often plagued by the paralysis of self-consciousness and high expectations. Subjected to population bottlenecks of wealth, inequality, and unjust power structures, their diversity on a variety of scales, including race and gender identities and class, is low.

Honors advisors are acutely aware of these stereotypes (Achterberg, 2005; Cognard-Black & Spisak, 2019). And there are, of course, partial truths behind the stereotypes of these students as serious, hardworking, motivated, over-committed, fearful of failure, skeptical, homogeneous, and too broadly focused. Advisors know, however, that a principal motivation of these students (and/or their parents) is simply to be recognized as honors worthy, which is a euphemism for successful. More than their confidence

or preparation, honors students are motivated by trust in the advice of others, especially family, teachers, counselors, and leaders in their own communities (Clark, et al., 2018). They also trust other extrinsic motivators: rankings and rigor, scholarships, and campus qualities like beauty, student spirit, or housing.

These networks of established authorities and standards may be shaken by the transition to and experiences of college life. Here, honors advisors will encounter students who wall themselves off from the normal pressures of the peer-identity formation process and inconveniences of questions about settled career aspirations. They conflate and struggle with decisions involving extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. These students, like so many young people, possess minds full of possibilities moving with unusual velocity. This nimbleness is an asset in many situations but may interfere with keeping plans in focus. They may also face more pressure to please parents and families. Some of the pressures they face are self-induced, but tangible concerns like career success, paying the bills, and a desire to help others are also burdens.

From the literature, we learn that honors students tend to be open-minded, forgiving, and accepting of humanity (Shepherd & Shepherd, 2001; Kaczvinsky, 2007). Many, if not most, want to engage globally through travel and cross-cultural experiences to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for people, cultures, and differences (Kem & Navan, 2006). But they are hard on themselves, often struggling to adjust to personal changes in the two-year or four-year college environment. Because they tend to be perfectionists—an adaptive, but sometimes maladaptive, response to academic challenges—honors students can also appear indecisive and unwilling to set aside peripheral interests (Gerrity, Lawrence, & Sedlacek, 1993; Parker & Adkins, 1995; Neumeister, 2004; Cross et al., 2018). They often are very good at many things and do not want to feel that they are abandoning these pursuits; they may want to chase both broad and narrow interests (Ender & Wilkie, 2000). This multipotentiality can manifest itself in advising sessions where one student, fearing potential opportunity costs, wants to select multiple majors and minors, another caroms from

major to major, and a third struggles to make a decision on any major at all; a few of these students will coast along unnoticed by faculty or advisors until they disappear altogether from the rolls. Amanda Cuevas' (2015) dissertation, *Thriving in College: Predictors of Honors Student Academic, Psychological, and Social Well-Being*, provides an excellent portrait of the honors student who is "plagued with multipotentiality" (p. v).

Honors students are driven to succeed but confront hostility and mistrust of intellect, science-based facts, and institutional authorities. While some honors students are gregarious and have full social calendars, others are reticent or bored. For every student who is over-confident about their academic abilities, nine others fear failure. Some honors students are deep learners and accept risks in their learning and experiences; others stick to tried-and-true surface learning techniques in completing their degrees. Skeptics compete with those who passively absorb content and idealists who launch causes and seek the best in others.

Generation Z students, who have their own unique experiences, face special challenges. A superior, evidence-based analysis of this generation is presented in Jean Twenge's *iGen* (2017): born into an age of smart phones and social media, they are comfortable with technology. They are also more comfortable with online learning and virtual meeting software than any previous generation. They are less likely to express a religious preference or an interest in religion at all. They seek security and comfort in their education and careers and tend to be safety-conscious in their personal lives. While some are accepting, others tend to be exclusionary, especially viewing authorities as obstacles or roadblocks in their paths. They are unusually resistant to growing up, even deploying the neologism "adulting," in part because of the generation's diminished economic prospects and rapidly eroding environmental sustainability.

Honors students commonly want to do too much or to tackle things that are beyond the scope of what is possible during their time at the institution. This inclination leads them to ask advisors insightful and probing questions. Although some of this over-investment of energies stems in part from sheer conscientiousness

and people-pleasing behavior, some of it results from the positive advising encounters that shift barriers around immobile thinking and identity foreclosure (Dougherty, 2007).

In practice, honors advisors must justify whether and how to offer personal, pedagogical, and curricular advising experiences that are markedly different from those offered to other students on their campuses (Kaczvinsky, 2007). Still, students who are predisposed to seek adult guidance in high school are primed to look for more of the same in college. In most cases, honors students want to be treated as equals, albeit with safety rails, partaking in a shared relationship with considerable give and take that makes them feel special and confident while protecting them from some of the pressures, anxieties, and realities of adult life. That these students will remain voracious consumers of advising resources is likely.

HOW HONORS GOALS AND OUTCOMES ARE DIFFERENT

Several trends will shape the future of honors advising, including changes affecting the demographics of honors. Honors students are more career-focused and anxious than ever before. The era of COVID-19 has disrupted their already fragile sense of belonging. The video teleconferencing embraced by honors during the pandemic and the mechanics grasped during this colossal, unplanned experiment have now been adopted as standard practice. The pandemic and its aftermath, especially shortages of labor and attention, also blurred boundaries between academic advisors, mentors, professors, and counselors and redoubled the belief of many educational authorities that learning in small-scale settings is better than any large-scale equivalent where students are easily lost.

Moreover, the Black Lives Matter movement revealed that honors shares the sins of American society, with its systematic racial inequalities, exceptionalism, exaggerated privileging of private goods, unreflective instrumentalism, economic barriers to participation, and excessive bureaucratic burdens. In too many places, honors residence halls recreate the patterns of segregation we see in the world. Honors privileges the upper classes, cosmopolitan backgrounds, and socially connected families. It also has growing

gender discrepancies, both binary and non-binary, which is noticeable in such things as student leadership.

Honors advising can recapitulate the blind spots of society. As Jeffery P. Hause (2017) says, "In the contemporary university, the injustice of unwarranted assumptions based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and economic status is now well-known. . . . [F]ailing to live up to the egalitarianism we sincerely believe in is sometimes shockingly easy" (p. 156). Sometimes honors advisors are too focused on students who are traditionally successful and can be celebrated. National recognition, awards, and notability are powerful motivators. At other times, advisors are distracted by heavy flows of students who are struggling academically. First-generation, transfer, nontraditional, and culture-shocked students can also expose advising weaknesses. Too much well-meaning focus on purpose and passion can even cause personal distress.

On the other hand, honors advisors have become crucial supporters of first-generation and underrepresented students. They have also become central to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Honors in many places is an anchorage for LGBTQIA communities and for exploration of countercultural mores. Advising as praxis, or critical advising, is a fresh approach that contains wisdom for honors programs and colleges (Puroway, 2016). Advising as praxis takes as its starting point the notion that the twin goals of advising are to uplift the oppressed and to transform the world. These are not insignificant goals, but advocates argue that advisors are well situated to change the reality and are, like their students, primed to believe that they are capable of doing so. Indeed, Martha K. Hemwall and Kent C. Trachte (1999) argue that a praxis view "allows advising to be consistent with actual mission statements of colleges" (p. 8). Critical self-reflection breaks the chains of the spoonfed banking model of education so common in teaching and learning. Advisors facilitate a process of conscientization (movement away from naïveté and toward awareness) by helping students to understand themselves as historical beings who are only dimly aware of the radical truth regarding the power and plausibility structures that surround them, make meaning, and produce unspoken

hegemonies and alienating assumptions. Puroway (2016) believes that every advisor should consider questions like these before giving students direction and guidance: "What are my dreams for the future of humanity and the planet? What dream do I have for each student I advise? How do I advise for compassion?" (p. 9).

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, during the recent pandemic I developed a new program on my campus to help stop-out students.[1] Several dedicated colleagues from across the university assisted me with this work. Since 2020, my thinking about and experience with stopped-out students—generally perceived as the opposite of the honors spectrum—has led me to group them alongside an established program of honors-eligible, self-design majors called Independent Scholars. I work with students in both tracks: former stop-outs are now completers and reframers of their educational journeys; the more traditional individualized major students remain explorers and innovators.

And yet, the two types have much in common. Both tracks of students design, implement, and complete focused, flexible, and comprehensive plans of study leading to a bachelor's degree that meets the students' personal and professional educational goals. These plans are based on existing coursework and establishing clear pathways to graduation. They all take advantage of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary bundles of courses or develop themed concentrations, often concerned with enduring human problems, creative intersections of areas of inquiry, or complex questions of social justice and social change.

The future belongs to advisors who transcend the typical perks of honors membership, that is, extrinsic rewards like early registration, special housing, and free printing. These idealists will want students to go beyond looking good on paper. They will want to reinforce the belief that living is learning and learning is living. The ancient Greek word *eudaimonia*—commonly translated as human flourishing, happiness, or prosperity—is a central concept in Aristotelian ethics and political philosophy. It should also be a central concept in honors education. In Aristotle's works, *eudaimonia* characterized instances of the highest human good (Aristotle, 2009).

Advisors must discuss our core values with one another, think about our collective and individual missions, develop our goals, and define strategies to attain those goals. We must understand our home institutions better, find out where we fit in the larger structures of higher education, and learn how to make meaningful connections with the people around us. In honors, we expect students to discover higher learning. We stress that college is not something that happens to students: students need to be actively involved. We want students to integrate learning into their daily lives, and that enterprise often requires seeking guidance and expertise from colleagues, mentors, and professors. We want advisees to find the connections and deeper meanings in what they learn, do, and experience by combining a liberal arts education with high-impact practices developed through research, internships and service, global learning, and collaboration. Honors values learning and doing: the life of the mind and the production of meaningful work. We encourage students to transcend narrow definitions of academic success and to develop their identities as active and engaged scholars and stewards of the world.

As advisors committed to the goals of honors and the academy, we are also expected to discover ourselves. One of our most important activities is to know ourselves better. Socrates called this the examined life. Colleges encourage people to discover what they are good at, what they like and do not like, and what they want from their lives. Education is about more than great books, research discoveries, or creating art. It is about personal growth, developing authentic selves, and finding purpose. Human flourishing takes place not in isolation but in relationships with others. We find fulfillment in the meaningful connections we make with people and communities. The challenge is to learn our purpose and to make conscious choices that benefit ourselves and the many other people with whom we share the planet.

Finally, our students should be encouraged to discover community. We live in an interconnected world. Our ideas and our endeavors affect those around us: our families, neighbors, fellow citizens, the global community. When we act together, we make

far greater impact than when we go it alone. When we recognize our diversity, we combine our strengths and overcome our weaknesses. We expect honors students to contribute to and learn from our communities. We ask them to consider what they will do with the knowledge they attain and how their education will make a difference in the world. Students must hone their intercultural competencies, engage in interdisciplinary learning, and look for opportunities for civic engagement in the local area and beyond.

One important next step might be to define operationally the student learning outcomes for advising, curricular, and co-curricular activities and to develop qualitative, quantitative, or rubric-based performance measures. In other words, what does "knowing/thinking/doing/feeling/asking _____ look like?" How can the evidence of learning be captured? And then, much further down the road, what will they do with this information? If advisors determine that students are not meeting particular early-stage outcomes, what might they put in place to try to encourage students' learning? Or, if students show high levels of knowledge/skills/affect in an area, what will advisors do with that information? Answering these questions in tandem with operationally defining the outcomes will make the information more useful to honors programs and honors colleges.

In truth, I believe that all advising—including honors advising—should be more like andragogy than pedagogy. Andragogy as advanced by educator Malcolm S. Knowles consists of strategies focused on adult learning. Andragogy pays allegiance to six pillars of lifelong learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live, learning to be, learning to change, and learning for sustainability (Knowles et al., 2020). Although it is often interpreted as the process of engaging non-traditional students within a structure of unique learning experiences, andragogy can help us determine what motivates and inspires honors alumni to continue interdisciplinary learning and relationship-building with each other and interact with current honors program students. We can use andragogy to keep the conversation going by integrating alumni into class projects, academic rites of passage, speaker series, and online community discussions.

Andragogy asserts that we should not advise young adults as if they are children: do not lecture, but instead appeal to curiosity; do not be a content planner or transmitter, but instead a process designer or relationship builder. Advisors should allow students to participate actively in the advising encounter. Advisors should convey to their students that they themselves have more questions than answers and are committed to a lifetime of inquiry and learning. We must role-model the openness and criticism of our own ideas that we want to see in students. For this reason, it is important that honors advisors take advantage of professional growth opportunities offered by national, regional, and local honors organizations, workshops, and conferences.

We must guide students into experiences that enable them to develop their potentialities. The emphasis must be on the new and changing nature of life as lived in the twenty-first century. Advisors are fellow travelers with students in the pursuit of lifelong learning and communities of interest, practice, and commitment. Together we struggle to find meaningful, relevant work; to achieve autonomy and intellectual independence; and to develop empathy, humility, and gratitude. Advising as andragogy encourages students to be producers of culture and social interventions rather than consumers of the status quo. Advising as praxis, *eudaimonia*, and andragogy create civically engaged adults who are well-prepared to be mentors to others.

ENDNOTE

[1]Several dedicated colleagues from across the university assisted me with this work. The other committee members were Carole Nash, Scott Paulson, Johnathan Walker, and Bill White. The unpublished report is entitled "Meeting Students Where They Are: Retaining JMU Students at Risk of 'Stopping Out.'"

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APPENDIX A

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