

INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to another edition of Let's Talk Ed with Professor Chris. As you all know, I'm always excited and our goal is to make sure that you are experiencing college and not surviving college and information that I could get to you anything that I can do for you, I will keep doing that.

We're talking today about Advising and I think this should be your first stop when you start college because we have some amazing people that advise.

So we'll get right to it.

So welcome, and if you have not subscribed, please do so.

Alright, we do the counselors we do success coaches.

We're talking about advising today. Today with me is my friend, special guest amazing advisor Katina.

How are you doing Katina?

KATINA BEASLEY: I'm doing well. How about yourself? Thank you so much for inviting me.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Anytime. Anytime. Thank you for taking the time for being here.

First of all, I take off my hat to you. I don't want to take it off literally because I haven't gotten a haircut in a while. So I'm going to keep it on, if you don't mind.

So Katina, how are you doing? Really. Are you doing good?

KATINA BEASLEY: I'm doing well. No complaints at all.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Really, you're doing good?

KATINA BEASLEY: No complaints at all.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, that's great.

So, here's a question that I always ask all my guests.

Ours is not a trick question that everybody goes OK, there we go again. If you say it's not a trick, question is going to be a trick question, but it's really not.

So, I want you to tell us a little bit about your journey that more so specifically is this where you've always seen yourself when you went to college, did you always say 'someday I am going to become an advisor?'

KATINA BEASLEY: No, not at all. When I began my journey from undergrad, I got my undergraduate degree in early childhood education, so I was a director of a child-care facility, and when I was in that facility or those facilities, I found myself doing a lot of professional development and training. And with that training, I realized that I was helping the faculty and the staff that was there just to do better in their job. Not that they were doing anything wrong, but we always want to excel.

From that point, I realized wait a minute... This is training and development, so I moved on and received my Master's Degree in Adult Education, Training and Development. With that training, that is where the advising really kicked in because I realized that all training and development, professional development, what Betty is, is advising providing you insight on what you can do better to reach your goals and that's how I ended up in academic advising.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay, so if I were to give anyone that I've interviewed at this point here, I will wager \$10,000, for anyone who has said yes, this is where I wanted to be. Nobody yet has said it, and that's the same thing with me. So great.

Alright, so let's get right to advising.

What is academic advising?

KATINA BEASLEY: Academic advising really is a partnership between the academic advisor and the student. That partnership is helping the students who come up with their goals and for them to see if their ultimate of completing whatever that degree is.

So when you're looking at academic advising, it provides you with those resources just to help the students to be successful academically in any other area in which they share that they are having those concerns.

But it's really providing that road map for the reason that they are in college, whatever that major is.

This is how you will begin and at the end, this is what you're going to need in order to achieve that goal.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So based on what you just said, I would make advising a requirement. Why isn't it a requirement for all freshmen when you come to school, or is it?

KATINA BEASLEY: It's not. Advising is not a requirement. At this point it's an option for the student. But for students to get started and not meet with an academic advisor, it's sort of like they're saying, "I got it. I already know how the school operates." whereas we know nothing is going to be the same no matter what school or institution that you go to.

So, for those students that do not come to academic advising, it's sort of like, "hello, we are here and we are really here the help," but no at this time academic advisor is not a requirement for students.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: I'm going to turn here just to kind of make a quick statement here when it comes to advising.

So, students, this is the kind of advice and it's not required. It's optional, but I equate that to what your professors would say in class... extra credit. And students think it's optional. No.

If they want, your p is telling you there's going to be extra credit, chances are you're not probably going to get an A in this class unless you do the extra credit. So, it's really not an option.

And I said this to say advice and it's very critical even if you think you know what you want to do, I still think that should be your first stop when you come to college.

Alright, so Katina, what does it take, anyone who's an advisor to do advising.

KATINA BEASLEY: Those characteristics of an advisor, I would say the first.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: The two or three.

KATINA BEASLEY: I would say the first thing is to be a good listener because as an advisor we are not in a position to say what you should do or this is the direction that you should go.

We are in a position where we are listening to what the goals are of the student and based on those goals, that's when we are providing that additional information as to those steps in order to reach that goal.

So one will be a good listener, great communication skills, because as an advisor you're meeting with all types of students from diverse backgrounds and you don't want to talk on a level where the student is not able to hear you because nine times out of ten they may not return because they don't understand what you're saying.

So having that ability to communicate at all levels is something else that's important. Being patient and understanding. That patience is... I can't hurry you up to figure out what do you want to do and as soon as I never say, what do you want to do for the rest of your life? Because that is too long.

But what is it that you can see yourself doing within the next two to three to four years and with that, that comes patience, because if you ask me when I was in undergrad, what do I want to do?

I started out starting in one direction, but it did change, so being in advisor, being patient, being able to listen and the clear communication skills, I think it's very important.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So you left one out and I know you did it intentionally because when I talk to you, oh by the way, what I didn't tell everyone is you are my advisor. As I said you I know again, I know you did it intentionally, you didn't put it in there. But Caring.

KATINA BEASLEY: Caring.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right. And again, I don't want us to get emotional here, but I've seen you, and a few advisors and how close you come to shedding a couple of tears for them.

So I think that is a key component for advising, in my own experience, and by the way, I think that's the reason I'm doing this here. Just trying to find ways to kind of help students so that caring is very, very, very critical.

KATINA BEASLEY: And it's critical because being that everyone is not coming from the same background and you don't know if it's the first generational student you have to care about the success of that student and most of the time when students return, it's because they realize "she cares about me." "She cares about my future." "I am excited."

I will say as an academic advisor, I'll be the first cheerleader for any student that step foot in my office. Because if you're saying that this is what you want to do, I believe you until you come back to say I changed my mind and that is fine too.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: I knew I had to get it out of you, right?

KATINA BEASLEY: Got to.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yes, great.

I'm not going to throw a little wrench in here, in our little conversation because I do want to ask what the process is for, you know, interview for advising. And the reason I say that is because

when you see a position that is open, that's an advisor you're going to ask yourself, is this what I want to do? Is this work?

And then we'll go down the checklist. Okay, you've got to be caring. You've got to have patience. You've got to be a good communicator.

Have you seen people advising that should not be advising?

KATINA BEASLEY: Absolutely yes, and the only reason that I see that is because of the student that returns and when they come to me and they say the last that advisor "just didn't get my questions answered" or "I wish that the other advisor would have shared" and most of the time when that conversation comes it's because I am being quiet and I'm listening to what that student is saying.

I mean, But it's just like so many other jobs, you know, you question, how did you get here? You know, how did you get to this point?

But at the same time, you know, that's when I hope that the student realizes if one person is not able to answer the questions, don't stop. Keep asking your questions and never stop asking your question because at the end of the day, me and you, we need that advisor to guide us.

Yes, it may be a certificate, diploma, degree, whatever that program is, but we don't know the details of the program.

So, at 5:01, when I'm done for my advising job for the day, I turned right into that student and no matter who it is, and I'm speaking to, I expect them to give me the information that I need to make a sound decision.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, I intentionally asked that question because I know you're going to clarify that because every so often you hear students say "oh, I don't know about this advisor."

Right. But also to just kind of encourage students to know that, just like you said, right, it might not be that one or you can always count on that one advisor to help you out.

Alright, let's share some of our advising stories, okay?

Let's start with What was some of the challenges that you get when someone comes to advising?

KATINA BEASLEY: Most of those challenges relate to students not being successful in their classes.

They feel as if "I'm not getting the help that I need to be successful in the class" and they come back to advising because of that caring spirit and they're like, "what do I do?" "I need help."

But when that does come up, the instructor, the faculty person, is the expert when it comes to the subject, you do not want an academic advisor telling you about calculus.

I don't know it, but that instructor is considered the expert. I always let students know, ask for help before you need it so that when you need it, you already know where to go for the help.

When it comes to other challenges, honestly, it's mostly about success in the class.

But keep in mind, with academic advisors and that's what we are talking about. Why are you here and what are your goals?

So, when those challenges do come up and they share it, it's just like anything else.

If we go to Walmart and they don't have the product that we are looking for, or if you get that representative, that is not helping you. You don't stop there. You keep going. You ask for that help and it's the exact same thing within the classes.

You know, students, If you were having those issues in the class, talk to that instructor. What is it that you can do in order to be successful in the class?

Because as an advisor, I have no idea. I don't know what those assignments are and I cannot help at all, so I'm sending you right back to the area that I know can assist in those different academic resources that are in place.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. So, you did touch on a very good point because I know advise is your goal above and beyond like you just sell a student comes to you with a subject matter... You're like, no, but you all know at least what the curriculum looks like, right?

I've seen you go through all the engineering, the business. You know you have to go through all of that.

I don't know what a business curriculum looks like, but you know, right so well.

That's why I send all of the students over to you.

KATINA BEASLEY: And even though I know what the curriculum looks like and I know how the classes are organized... I can't tell the student about the details of the class.

That's where that department becomes the expert. But yes, I can say you're going to have to complete 58 credit hours, and here are the classes to complete, but I can't say that, you know, what these two classes are excellent to go together because I do not know the content of the class other than the course description that's listed.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: How well do you think students trust you when they come to you for advising? Is that something you think you need to build?

KATINA BEASLEY: Definitely, but I think that trust comes especially at that initial advising session. Once the ice has been broken and that student realized, yes, I am an academic advisor, but I am just like you.

I think once I'm able to establish that that I'm no different from you, that the conversation opens up. The honesty opens up and even if a student comes and their parent is with them, I've let them know right there in front of the parent. Our conversation will be the same no matter if the parent is here or not.

I appreciate you because you were taking control of your education.

So, when it, I don't know, that trusting part... I want the student to trust me because that means that if they have questions, no matter how big or how small they're going to come back.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great.

Alright, so you have to be honest with me. Have you tried to tell a student this major is not good for you? Let's look at something else and how does that usually go?

KATINA BEASLEY: Yes. Yeah.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK.

KATINA BEASLEY: And when that conversation comes up and I let them see what other classes that are coming up in the program.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, you do provide the options. Absolutely.

KATINA BEASLEY: Yeah.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK.

KATINA BEASLEY: And those options is not based on what I think is best for them.

It's based on them looking at the different programs, and what they see themselves doing. And it's not where I'm asking them to make a decision right now.

No, I need you to go home. I need you to look at it. I need you to become a part of it, and if you believe it, then I believe it. But my job is to provide you with all the options.

It's just like for a student that's looking at taking four classes for one semester.

Yes, you provide those initial four classes, but you always have those alternative course options and especially if they are programs that can meet the same goal, whether it's transferring to a four-year college or receiving those immediate skills. As long as a student can see the options and see them doing something that they like to do or they think they would like to do, it makes my job even easier.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, you haven't had any student call you a "dream killer?" Like, that's a lady who killed my dreams.

Now, that's crazy.

KATINA BEASLEY: And only reason why I can say "no" with a positive "no," is because I would not want anyone to kill my dreams.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great.

KATINA BEASLEY: I am that same student. At 5:01 I turn into the student. But no, and I have spoke to many students where they feel like, you know, they have been defeated... just based on a conversation.

And it's sort of like, you know, you can have those conversations and you can hear it, but guess what? You do not have to believe it because they don't know who you are or what your ultimate goal is, and that's what that trust comes back in and being able to listen.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: When you say you were tough advisor, and I said this because my students love me dearly. But they will tell you, "Professor Chris, in his class... he's not playing" Right? And I don't know, maybe there's some truth to it?

But maybe it is also because of my background and also it's also engineering. So, I want to make sure I put the best out there, but they will tell you if you have lunch with Professor Chris, it's a whole different person, right?

And I think that's where they trust, you know, they build confidence, they will come to you.

And by the way, you know, when I interview some of the counselors, you know, I told him I said, do you know, why students will not come to you? But rather come to me... and not just me, as you know, I'm so special.

It's a trust issue, right? That they don't come to you. But for advising I really think we always have to go back to the caring part because I'll be honest with you and when we have faculty that we expect them to advise, you know, and I've said this.

I always tell them, I go... Honestly, if you don't want to do advising, I get it. Let me know because you're building relationships, if you're not in that business or building relationships, please let me know because the last thing I want to happen is a student to come to you leaving feeling more depressed than when they came in, right?

And of course, I know you don't have any problem with that, Katina. I... you just... yeah.

KATINA BEASLEY: And I don't know if that is because of that caring heart.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

KATINA BEASLEY: I mean, because I did start with early education, with the babies.

So I mean, and you think that it wouldn't, you know, go hand in hand, but early education and adult education, it really does go hand in hand.

Where when I was going through the motions of it, that's like what to do?

I'm going, you know, opposite ends, but I don't.

I wouldn't say that I am tough, but I do ask the questions that I can't answer, that only that student can answer and then once they are able to, you know, provide whatever answer not for me, but for themselves. I think they beat themselves up more than what I do, so I would say no, I'm not a tough advisor and when the students do come in and they are beating themselves up because they got all C's for the fall semester. That's the fall semester.

Learn what you're going to do differently for your next semester, but there's no reason to beat yourself up. The world is going to want to do it anyway. Be easy on yourself.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: During the interview process for advising. Do you think they asked you whether you care about people? Was that one of the questions? No, that's not.

KATINA BEASLEY: It had more to do with processes.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK.

KATINA BEASLEY: You know, you know. And I made it clear during my interview phase that I didn't have the answer because those questions were processes.

My thing was, I'm going to have to ask for support and I'm one of those people, where I say, you know, to the student, ask for help before you need it... I ask for help right now.

I've been doing that advising for a while, but I still go to my coworkers and my colleagues and I ask how about this or how about that because I'm not afraid to ask a question and any question that someone asking you shouldn't be intimidated by it because they're coming to you as the expert.

If you don't know the answer, then that's fine. Give me one moment and I'll get it, but a question should not be intimidating at all. It's an opportunity to learn.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Katina, I'm, I'm excited again, as usual.

You know, when I we have this conversation here, I don't want to end right here, but we will have to do that about for the students.

You know, I want every student to understand that this is what advising this. This is the face of advising.

KATINA BEASLEY: It really is.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Very welcoming. It's not... It's not me. I love to do advising, but very welcome and very approachable. You know, you do really care and, you know, you do everything to help students.

So please, please again students, look for your advice and get it even if you don't think you need it is a great resource for you.

Before we close though... any closing statements, any closing remarks, you will have for students as far as advising goes.

KATINA BEASLEY: I would say for each advising session, I always end "ask for help before you need it." So when you need it, you know where the help is.

When it comes to the various academic resources, all students are in college for their academics. You want to know where that help is for every subject area that you're in. So please ask for help before you need it.

So when you need it, you already know where to go and am I saying that you're going to need assistance? You may not, but guess what? Just in case you do, it's already right there.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, I know I lied when I said we're going to close this out, but I just had one more question.

How was your advising as a student? Did you get a Katina?

KATINA BEASLEY: Oh my goodness, yes.

To the point where when I say I loved my advisor for my undergraduate and for my graduate program, I use them as references, and I've been out of school just little while.

But they were able to help me, I mean, and motivate me.

And even once I, you know, became that adult with children, I still went back to my undergrad advisor, and he still treats me like the student.

But it's the point of I knew that he cared for me. And it was years later that I went back to him. But he remembered me.

So we just said, OK, you had an impact on me and my impact is... yes, I may be here today, but I remember what my advisor presented to me and he gave me all of the hope of... yes, I can. And dream killer? Not at all.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: You know, Katina. That's so great because I have students that graduated almost 10 years ago that I still communicate with and that's great.

But I was like, wow, I don't communicate with any of my professors or advisors, and I do have the few that I do have some connection with. But you know, I never really kind of connect with them, so this is great. It's great to hear that.

KATINA BEASLEY: Even now.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Well, that's good, because I talk to people, and they're like... oh advising, what's that?.

What is that? I never had advisors. I never, you know, had anyone like that when I was in college.

KATINA BEASLEY: So, and I will say, well, my master's program, my faculty advisor was the former Chancellor of the College. So, in my world it was jackpot. There was no way that I was not going to have all of that experience in my hands and not take advantage of it.

But am I saying academic advisors have all the answers? Absolutely not.

We that is not the case, but academic advisors can point you in the direction of the area to assist with any questions.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Where can students find you?

KATINA BEASLEY: Academic advising is located on all the various campus sites.

Each campus... at the Northern Wake Campus, the Southern Wake Campus, Western Wake Campus and Health Sciences by appointment. As well as the Public Safety Campus by appointment, and the RTP campus. Trying to make certain that I include all of the locations.

Yes, but academic advising is available at all of the locations and they do have the social platforms in which various events are advertised so that you know exactly what is going on as well as you can always send an email to advising@waketech.edu.

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. Well, there you have it again.

Advising and advising and advising. Please, please please... if you haven't subscribed, do so and also, if you have any questions on advising. Make advising your first stop when you start college.

Once again, Professor Chris is here for you. Bring your questions. Let me know who else you want me to interview. Stay tuned.

Katina, great.

KATINA BEASLEY: Thank you.