



**MORGAN**  
STATE UNIVERSITY™

## The Academic Advisor Newsletter

Welcome to the Morgan State University's Academic Advisor Newsletter. This electronic newsletter is a resource for all academic advisors at Morgan State. Each month The Academic Advisor Newsletter will include advising tips, best practices in academic advising, on-campus support services for students, an excerpt from an academic advising article, important dates to remember, and other pertinent information to support academic advisors at Morgan State.

### ***What's New at MSU: Advising Syllabus***

An Academic Advising Syllabus is a tool used by academic advisors to communicate the expectations of the advising relationship to their advisees. It outlines the advisor's and advisee's responsibilities in the advising partnership as well as the expected learning outcomes. It is highly recommended that advisors provide each advisee with their advising syllabus at the onset of the advising partnership. The syllabus should be revisited periodically throughout the advising experience to ensure that the advising learning outcomes are being accomplished.

To review and/or download Morgan State University's Academic Advising Syllabus [click here](#). Advisors are encouraged to make this syllabus their own. Advisors can add their contact information as well as additional expectations they have of their advisees.

## February 2020

### **In this Issue:**

- ⇒ *What's New at MSU: Advising Syllabus*
- ⇒ **Important Dates**
- ⇒ *Student Services Spotlight:*  
**Second Year Experience**
- ⇒ *Featured Advising Article:*  
**4 Secrets of Effective Advising**

---

### **Contact Information**

Email:

[fj\\_advising@morgan.edu](mailto:fj_advising@morgan.edu)

Website:

[www.morgan.edu/fjadvising](http://www.morgan.edu/fjadvising)

# SYE SPRING 2020 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING EVENTS

**FEB 11**

**Photography  
Session  
with  
John Clark  
Mayden**

*Mr. Mayden's  
photography  
captures the stories  
of Baltimoreans  
and an ever-  
changing city.*

**MAR 3**

**Making Music  
with  
The National  
Electronics  
Museum**

*A rare chance for  
students to build a  
Theremin circuit,  
an electronic  
musical  
instrument.*

**MAR 25**

**Professional  
Development  
with  
The Baltimore  
Museum of Art**

*Get a behind the  
scenes tour and  
have a chance to  
network with each  
of the departments  
at the BMA.*

**APR 16**

**Working on  
Water  
with  
P.E.A.R.L.**

*Visit Morgan's  
notable aquatic  
lab and experience  
what it's like to  
work on the  
Chesapeake Bay.*

**APR 27**

**Behind the  
Scenes  
with  
WBAL-TV**

*Before you check  
Twitter, visit  
WBAL and  
experience first-  
hand how news  
production works.*

## ***Student Services Spotlight:* Second Year Experience (SYE)**

The Second Year Experience (SYE) at Morgan State University is designed to engage students, returning to Morgan State for the second year, in out-of-classroom (experiential) learning opportunities. Well-planned, supervised and assessed experiential learning programs can stimulate academic inquiry, promote interdisciplinary learning, civic engagement, career development, cultural awareness, leadership, and other professional and intellectual skills.

Our SYE Program utilizes SYE Coaches (full-time academic advisors) as a centerpiece of the program. Each SYE Coach is assigned to either the College of Liberal Arts or one or more of the eight Schools. Formal and informal interaction with SYE Coaches (advisors) can be a predictor of student success. The SYE program is making it a priority to create an environment in which coaches and students will have the opportunity to enhance the experiential learning experiences of their students by assisting them with the selection and fulfillment of their experiences: internships, research projects, community service, service-learning courses, study abroad, volunteering, campus to career field trips, conferences, and job shadowing. Student participation is documented through the completion of an Experiential Learning Plan (ELP) which is completed by the student with the support of the student's SYE Coach.

The SYE Program also features SYE Ambassadors (students who participated in the program's first year (2018-2019) to help promote the program and encourage student participation. A graduate assistant provides support as the SYE Outreach Liaison. She is responsible for reaching out to prospective sites that will be willing to provide experiential learning opportunities for our students.

Visit the SYE website ([www.morgan.edu/sye](http://www.morgan.edu/sye)) for more information about SYE and upcoming event details.

*Source: Dr. Brenda James, Director - Center for Academic Success and Achievement*

## Important Dates

February  
2020

Feb 4th

Connections 2020  
Internship Fair

Feb 6th

Mitchell-Quarles  
Convocation

Feb 11th

SYE Event  
Photo Session  
with John Clark  
Mayden

Feb 14th

Last Day to Apply  
for Spring 2020  
Graduation  
(Undergrads)

Feb 19th

President's  
Spring Town hall

Feb 20th

Morgan  
C.A.R.E.S. More  
Customer Service  
Training

## Featured Academic Advising Article:

### 4 Secrets to Effective Advising

In an age when [colleges are struggling to meet enrollment goals](#) and the [public continues to question the value of higher education](#), admissions officers at institutions across the country are working to improve student recruitment strategies. However, they aren't alone in their battle. Today, perhaps more than ever before, academic advisors must do everything in their power to retain current students.

Some of you have chosen academic advising as a profession. Others, like faculty at small colleges, are tasked with advising a group of students in addition to their teaching and research responsibilities. Regardless of how you acquired this group of students, you play a critical role in helping them devise educational plans compatible with their long-term goals, ensuring they complete their degrees, and ultimately shaping their futures. It is no doubt a challenging field, but those who do it well are rewarded with not only seeing their students succeed but contributing to their institutions' overall health and reputation.

So, what's the secret to effective advising? The following competencies are essential for any academic advisor.

#### 1. Take Ownership of Your Role in Students' Success

"Relationships matter, and connection is central to building strong, effective advising and mentoring relationships," says Celia Cook-Huffman, assistant provost at Juniata College, a private liberal arts school with an 85% retention rate. "When students have strong connections with mentors, they retain at higher rates."

While the ultimate responsibility for making choices about educational plans and goals rests with each student, advisors should serve as their partner throughout the college journey. Advisors have an obligation to help students plan a realistic path through, and beyond, college and make course corrections along the way. Good advisors recognize that they have the power to intervene, refer, and advocate for their students and take an active role in their students' academic lives. They not only know they can -- but want to -- make a difference for their advisees and they aren't afraid to put in extra work.

#### 2. Build Relationships and Learn to Read Between the Lines

While it may seem like a no-brainer, Cook-Huffman emphasizes that step one is getting to know your advisees, *really know them*.

"Ask open-ended questions; Listen -- *really listen* -- to their narratives about themselves," she advises. "Listen hard, listen because you care, listen to understand from their point of view."

Tracey Farnsworth, a recipient of [NACADA's 2019 Outstanding Advising Award](#), adds that you should do so without interrupting or making assumptions. She also highlights the importance of reading between the lines because students don't always directly ask for help.

*Continued on page 4*

## **Featured Academic Advising Article (continued):**

### **4 Secrets to Effective Advising**

"A lot of advisors early on in their careers are very focused on the information they think the student needs, rather than being focused on what the student is communicating -- both verbally and nonverbally," she explains.

Jaelyn Graves, also recognized by NACADA for her exceptional advising, credits much of her success to building relationships, engaging in open and reflective conversations, and recognizing when a student may be wrestling with something and needs guidance.

"Being open and honest with students about my life and career path has allowed me to forge strong and trusted relationships with students," she says. "When they come to see you as a person, as a friend, they allow themselves to trust you, confide in you, and consult you when they're confronted with decisions."

### **3. Know When and Where to Refer**

As noted in Erin Justyna and Rebecca Daly Cofer's [Ten 'Must Have' Tips](#) for academic advisors, it's important to acknowledge your "own limits and create partnerships across [your campus]." It's okay to admit you don't have all the answers, but you should be able to point your students in the direction of someone who does. Academic advisors must be aware of campus and community resources that support student success and should be able to make effective referrals.

Remember, students often don't directly ask for help. If you sense that they may be struggling financially, for example, inquire a bit further and make a referral to the financial aid office if necessary.

You should also schedule a follow-up appointment to discuss the results of the referral and determine whether additional steps are necessary.

### **4. Make the Time**

Throughout her career, Graves has learned never to make a student feel rushed. She suggests, if they want to talk, take the time to listen and guide them if you can.

"Ask them how they're doing outside the classroom," she recommends. "If you run out of time, ask them to come back on another day to finish that conversation. If a student's name crosses your desk or pops into your head when you haven't seen them in a while, shoot them an email to check in... It's those little things that prove advisors to be trustworthy allies. Those are the things that enhance the student experience and positively impact things like retention."

### **Remember**

No one said academic advising is easy, but if you work at it, you can make a positive influence on the lives of your students. Dig in; own it. Get to know your resources around campus, have real conversations with your students about their aspirations, invest in their success, learn from other successful advisors around you, and keep developing your advising skills. It only stands to benefit you, your school, and your students.

Source: Grubb, L. (2019). 4 Secrets of Effective Academic Advising. Retrieve from *Higher Ed Jobs* website: <https://www.higheredjobs.com/Articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID=1962>