

What do I need to be an effective advisor?

1. Have a sense of humor.
2. Build relationships.
3. Rid myself of any preconceived notions about the students so I am able to serve them without bias.
4. Realize that not all Indian students want or need my services.
5. Get to know their communities.
6. Stay in touch with their tribal education offices.
7. Be visible in their community.
8. Give myself permission to hold their hands when it is necessary.
9. Help them set realistic goals.
10. Empower them to know how to advocate for themselves.
11. Provide them with advocacy training
12. Do not assume all Indian students are at-risk.
13. Empower those students who are academically prepared to take on a leadership role for the at-risk students.
14. Help students realize their unique talents by providing them opportunities to practice leadership.
15. Advocate for them even if it is not the popular thing to do.
16. Never minimize or trivialize their concerns; especially if it concerns race.
17. Recruit students from my own backyard.
18. Learn to make their favorite foods, such as, fry bread.
19. Make them a birthday cake.

Recommendations

Recruitment and Retention: The following recommendations are taken from *Serving Native American Students* (Mary Jo Tippeconnic Fox, Shelley C. Lowe, George S. McClellan).

1. Faculty and staff should keep abreast to the issues that Native students face.
2. Collaborate with Native American students, their families, and tribes to make your campus a warm and welcoming place. Offer space on campus for tribal educators and leaders so they can continue to support the Native American students.
3. Work with Native American students prior to their arrival on campus.
4. Orient students to the campus: bookstore, bursar, financial aids, etcetera.
5. Orient students to the local area. (We recruit our students to our community as well as our campus).
6. Students must have a place where they feel like they belong.
7. Find out what local services are available to Native American students.
8. Provide help and be proactive about it.
9. Never generalize; treat each student as a unique person.

10. Orient yourself to Native models or ways of thinking. Be careful not to develop a one size fits all model “Indian” model.
11. Perceive and treat each Native student as able to succeed.
12. Focus on the importance of schoolwork and classes. Some Native students come to school with the sole purpose of earning a degree. Involvement in the social aspect may be secondary.
13. Find ways to identify and nurture Native American students’ own strengths. Many Native students have strong ties to their families.
14. Conduct more research. There needs to be more research on this population.