



The Role of Faculty as Counselors and Advisors in Promoting Student Success

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Chrissy Coley, Ph.D. Background

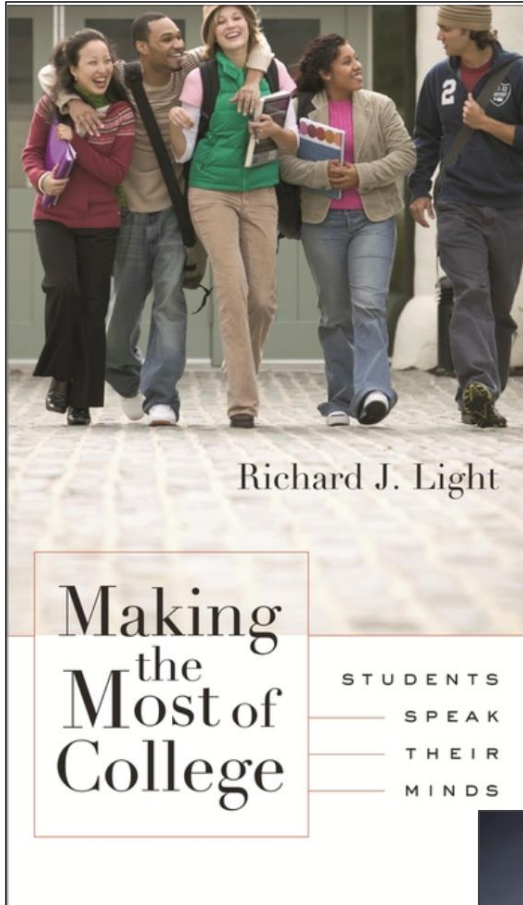
Experience

- Senior Manager Strategic Consulting – Ellucian since 2008
- Assistant Vice Provost for Student Success Initiatives – University of South Carolina
- Dean of Students – Columbia College
- Director of the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership – Mercer University

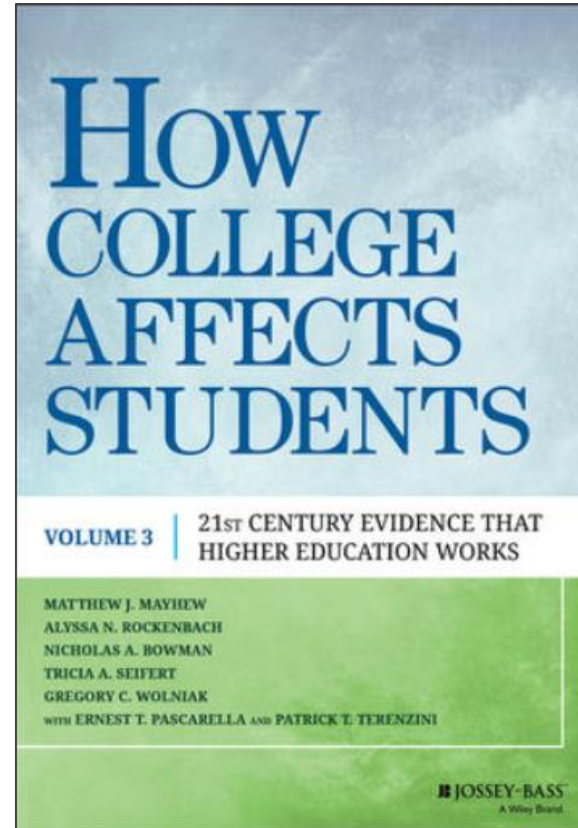
Education

- Change Leadership Certificate – Cornell University
- Ph.D. – Higher Education Administration – Georgia State University
- M.Ed. – Higher Education and Student Affairs – University of South Carolina
- B.A. – Interdisciplinary Studies – Gardner-Webb University

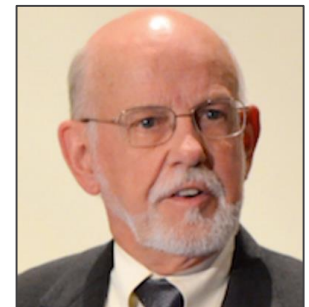
Relevant Scholarship



Richard Light
Harvard University



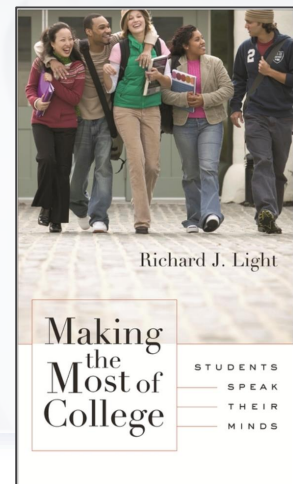
Ernest Pascarella
University of Iowa



Patrick Terenzini
Penn State



Scholarship on Faculty Counseling and Advising





“Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience.”

Richard Light, *Making the Most of College*, p. 81

Participant Interaction

- Please turn to your neighbor and introduce yourself.
- Describe the faculty counselor or advisor (whether formal or informal) who made the biggest impact on you as an undergraduate student.
 - What did this faculty advisor do or say to make such a difference for you?
 - What made him/her stand out from the others?



Richard Light's Findings on Best Practices for Faculty Advising and Counseling

- Teach Students How to Think, Rather than What to Think
- Mentor Students and Connect Students with Other Mentors
- Ask Challenging Questions that Connect Students' Academic Studies and Personal Interests
- Guide Students in Making Thoughtful, Intentional Choices to Use Their Time Effectively
- Encourage Students to Get Involved Outside of Class

Finding #1: Great Faculty Advisors Teach Students How to Think, Rather than What to Think

“Young men and women arriving at college immediately confront a set of decisions:

- Which courses to choose?
- What subject to specialize in?
- What activities to join?
- How much to study?
- How to study?

Such decisions are intensely personal. Often they are made with little information. Yet their consequences can be enormous.”



“Advisors play a critical role. They can ask a broad array of questions and make a few suggestions that can affect students in a profound and continuing way.”

Richard Light, *Making the Most of College*, p. 84

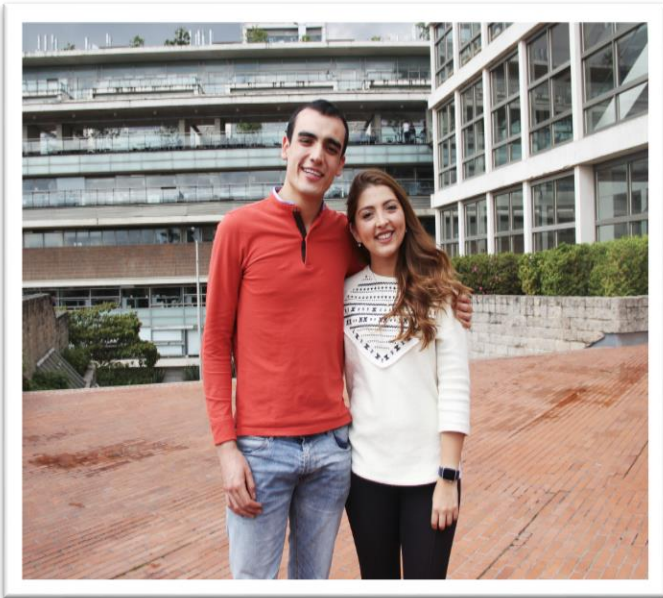
Finding #2: Great Faculty Advisors Mentor Students and Connect Students with Other Mentors

- 1) “What are your goals at college?”
- 2) “Tell me about your background.”
- 3) “Let’s discuss your study plan for your first year courses and how these will lead to making wise, informed choices in future years.”
- 4) “So now that we have had this discussion, what do you see as your job for this term?”
- 5) “Your job is to get to know one faculty member reasonably well this semester, and have that faculty member get to know you reasonably well.”

Harvard University's Mentoring Experiences

- “Mentored experiences, organized outside the regular classroom structure and not done for academic credit, have a strong positive impact on students” (p. 94).
- At Harvard, a student writes a proposal for a research project, applies for funding, and finds a faculty member willing to supervise the work.
- Harvard offers “an enormous number of opportunities” with over 100 faculty - including “some of the busiest and most distinguished senior professors” - volunteering to serve as mentors.

Finding #3: Great Faculty Advisors Ask Challenging Questions that Connect Students' Academic Studies and Personal Interests



“At key points in successful students’ college years, an academic advisor asked questions, or posed a challenge, that forced them to think about the relationship of their academic work to their personal lives.”

Richard Light, *Making the Most of College*, p. 88

Finding #4: Great Faculty Advisors Guide Students in Making Thoughtful, Intentional Choices to Use Their Time Effectively

- 1) Assign advisees to complete a time log for 2 weeks, tracking activities in 30 minute intervals
- 2) After 2 weeks, debrief for 15 minutes with the advisee:
 - How did you anticipate you would spend your time?
 - How was your time actually spent?
 - Are you pleased with the way you spent each day?
 - Are there certain changes you might like to make?
 - There is no single correct change – the key point is making thoughtful decisions!
 - What is an effective plan to make these changes?
 - How can you use “in between” time?
- 3) After 2 more weeks, follow-up to see if the advisee is applying these insights and suggestions



“A single follow-up call, with encouragement to persist in efforts to implement changes” has made a measurable difference in the lives of some of our students.”

Richard Light, *Making the Most of College*, p. 91

Finding #5: Great Faculty Advisors Encourage Students to Get Involved Outside of Class

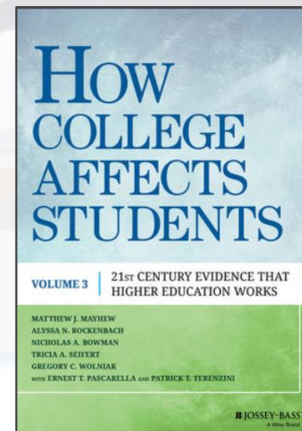
“For some students, the single biggest contribution an advisor can make is to encourage them to join a campus organization or group that will give them social and personal support.”



Richard Light, *Making the Most of College*, p. 98



Research-Based Practices for Student Learning and Success



Faculty Impacts on Student Cognitive Gains and Educational Attainment

- 1) Course—related interactions between faculty and students
- 2) Thoughtful, timely, critical feedback
- 3) Opportunities for meaningful reflection on class materials
- 4) Introduction of challenging tasks and assignments in class
- 5) Collaborative-learning activities in class
- 6) Emphasis of enriching educational experiences (such as study abroad, internships, or undergraduate research)
- 7) Quality and effectiveness of teaching and instruction, as defined by teaching clarity and organization

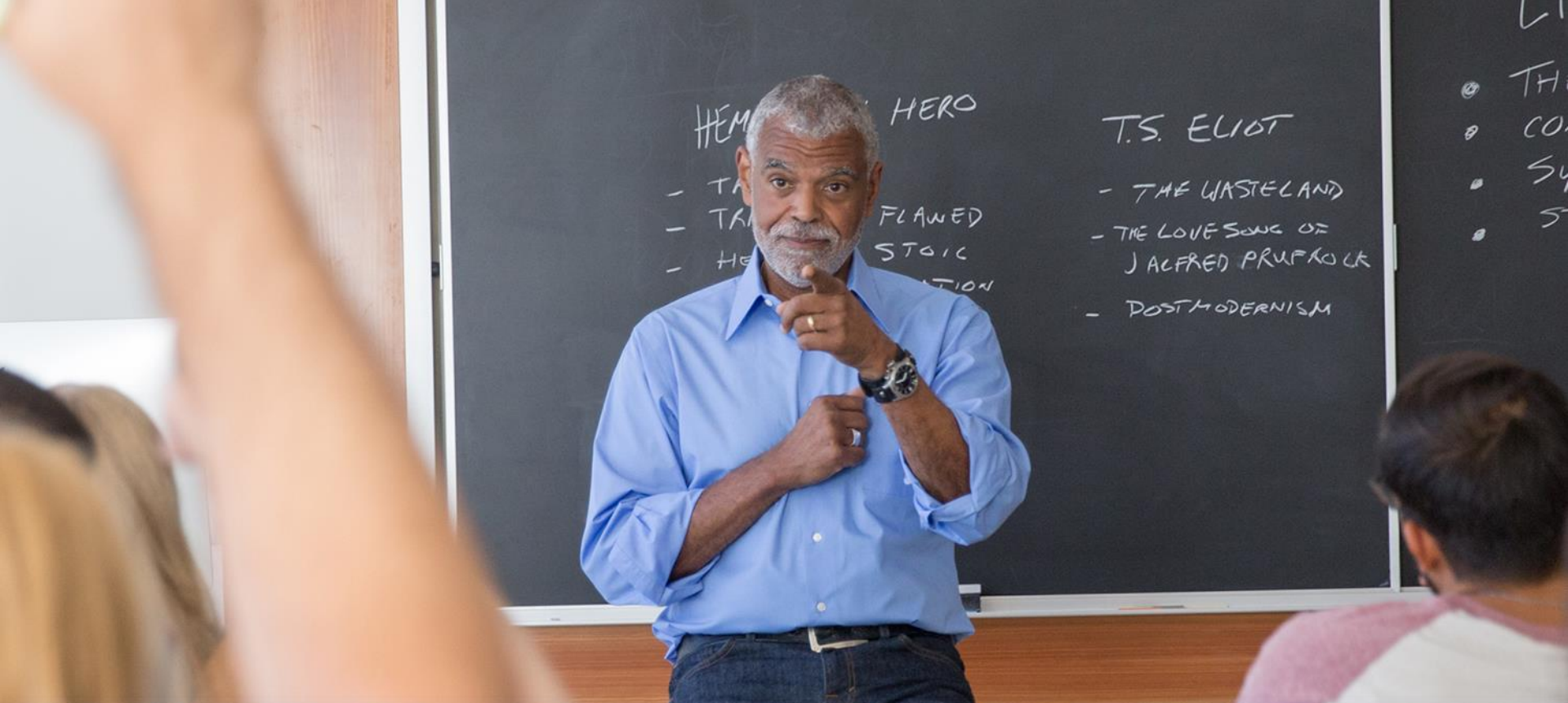
Academic and Social Integration Impacts on Educational Attainment

- “College academic achievement is the strongest within-college predictor of educational attainment” (p. 379), even when controlling for other institutional, pre-college, or student factors.
- “Social involvement is associated with social integration, which leads to institutional commitment, which then predicts retention and persistence” (p. 415).

Academic/Social Integration Programmatic Initiatives

Demonstrating Positive Relationships with Educational Attainment

- Learning communities are perhaps the most impactful of all academic/social integration programs (small cohorts of students enrolling in 2+ courses together), with positive relationships to grades, retention, and graduation.
- Supplemental Instruction has been found to have a positive relationship with course pass rates across a variety of subjects and student types, when controlling for pre-college variables.



Reflection Questions

Reflection Questions

- Please consider the following questions:
 - What are you currently doing well at your institution as it pertains to integrating students in their academic and social communities?
 - What is one new programmatic initiative that would be worth exploring?



Thank you!



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