

# AIM

## Academic Improvement Model

April 14, 2010

The goal of AIM is to help students move toward becoming self aware thinkers and developing intellectual Traits that will give students the tools they need to reach academic success. Academic advisors use a Socratic advising model including intrusive advising to work toward this goal.

**Socratic advising** includes a critical thinking framework, intrusive advising model, counseling techniques, Socratic dialog, and a teaching and learning paradigm.

*Critical Thinking Framework:* Using the Paul-Elder Critical Thinking framework, advisors evaluate student thinking, help them reconstruct their thinking which results in the students becoming self-aware thinkers. Advisors help students move toward developing the intellectual Traits of perseverance, autonomy, courage, and confidence and reasoning.

*Intrusive Advising Model:* As defined by the advisors in AIM: Proactive intervention strategies to assist students in achieving their academic goals. It is a personalized approach designed to inform and empower students to be engaged and responsible for their academic success. By meeting with students in person a minimum of three times and following up with phone calls and email, the advisor has time to develop an on-going, trusting and effective advising relationship with students.

*Counseling Techniques:* Advisors use counseling techniques such as attending, caring, understanding, paraphrasing, listening, and clarifying. Advisors using counseling techniques demonstrate the traits of genuineness, empathic understanding, and unconditional positive regard.

*Socratic Dialog:* Advisors use Socratic questioning in their advising sessions with students to help guide them in arriving at decisions, conclusions and solving problems.

*Teaching and Learning Paradigm:* Academic advising includes a curriculum, pedagogy, and learning outcomes. With a Socratic advising model, the curriculum is the “what” advisors teach (i.e., academic policies, critical thinking skills, problem solving, decision making, goal setting, etc.); the pedagogy is the Socratic advising model (critical thinking framework, intrusive advising, counseling techniques, Socratic dialog, teaching and learning paradigm); the learning outcomes are for students to reach academic success by becoming self aware thinkers and developing the intellectual Traits of autonomy, perseverance, courage, and confidence in reason.

## Protocol

**Student Self Reflection:** Students who elect to participate in AIM are asked to complete a self reflection, a series of open ended questions. The advisor reviews the students’ self reflection to assess what type of thinker the student is:

Naïve: The student may not be aware about his/her academic status. The student may not know or understand what being on “academic warning” means. Or, the student may not care that he/she is on academic warning.

Externally Focused: The student may tend to blame others or their circumstances for their poor academic performance, or the student may not feel empowered to do anything about his/her situation. Their locus of control is outside of their reach. The student may understand the policy but does not connect with the personal implication.

Self-Aware: The student is more advanced in his/her thinking than the Naïve or Self-Centered thinker. The student may be willing to accept responsibility for his/her situation but does not know how to go about resolving their problem/situation. The student understands the policy and implications, and is ready to accept help to create a plan to return to good standing.

If the student is a Naïve thinker or a Externally-Focused thinker, most likely the advisor will need to spend more time with the student to help him/her become a Self-Aware thinker.

Utilizing the Socratic dialog toolbox, the advisor applies the intellectual Standards (clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness) to deconstruct and reconstruct the student’s faulty thinking (Elements of Thought): point of view, question at issue, information, assumptions, and implications. This practice will help the student become a Self-Aware thinker and develop toward meeting the intellectual Traits of autonomy, perseverance, courage, and confidence in reason.

Once the student starts developing the intellectual Traits, they are in a position to develop a plan to return to good academic standing.

Advisors will collect information using prepared templates.

Student Thinker Types based on Paul & Elder’s Three Main Kinds of Thinkers available at [www.criticalthinking.org](http://www.criticalthinking.org)

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