



Best Practices for Notes in CardSmart

There is value in recognizing a common approach to record and maintain notes on appointments with students. CardSmart provides a place to record, share and integrate the advice that various University partners provide to students here at UofL. This helps facilitate the sharing of students' advising history between offices working with that student. This tool helps University partners understand the student's history and better integrate past advising or guidance into each campus partner's advice to the students. This sharing of information should enhance students' universal experience during their time at UofL.

The goal in recording notes is to provide a historical record of student interactions with staff. This record should include general issues/topics discussed and advice provided. This record can also provide useful insights with other campus partners who have a legitimate educational need in accessing these records.

Advisors and other staff members are typically prohibited from disclosing student records without as students' written consent. However, the University's FERPA Policy explains one exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to university officials with legitimate educational interests. A university official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Please review the [University's FERPA Policy](#).

Why Take Notes?

- It creates a record of the students advising contacts and advice provided.
- It personalizes the advisor/student experience and aides in efficiency for subsequent advising interactions.
- It helps communicate critical information to students and University personnel.
- It provides documentation that can easily clear up misunderstandings between students and University personnel.
- It provides documented protection in case of legal action.

Tips for Effective Note Taking

- Write your notes on a student meeting as soon as possible.
- Be factual and objective.
- Include needs of student, steps to support student's need, advice and recommendations, follow-up actions, referrals and a summary as it relates to students' academic success.
- When framing your notes consider including information that:
 - Helps the student
 - Helps future advisors or colleagues understand the student's advising experience and/or the advice you provided
 - Includes a list of courses you advised the student to take along with alternatives
 - Includes students' academic and career goals
 - Facilitates the relationship with the student



- Explains possible consequences if advice is not adhered to
- Includes referrals of a non-sensitive nature
- Includes referrals of a sensitive nature, with limited details
- Helps you in future interactions with the student

Be mindful that students have the right to see anything documented about them, and anyone documenting notes should expect that the student will be able to see the notes

What to include in notes

Information to help the student

- "Reminded the student to take math placement exam before registering for spring semester so that they can begin their math sequence."
- "Asked student to bring list of ten courses of interest for next semester to our advising session."
- "Discussed the repeat policy and the importance of repeating HIST 101 and ECON 201 next semester."
- "We agreed to the following 6 hours in Summer 18: HIST 101 and COMM 111. Alternative to COMM 111 is COMM 115."
- "Discussed the importance of taking FIN 301 next semester because it is a pre-requisite for most of their major requirements and could set them back in their 4-year plan."

Information to help a future advisor

- "Student plans to complete prerequisites for admission to medical school in addition to their major requirements."
- "Student is planning on adding a minor in Philosophy or Sociology to complete their electives, but is currently unsure."

Describe possible consequences

- "Student wants to enroll in 19 hours next semester. Cautioned student about heavy academic load and how it may impact her GPA."
- "Reminded student of the GPA requirements for Good Standing, and we discussed the grades needed this semester to avoid a negative academic action."

Referrals

- "Encouraged student to make an appointment with a career counselor to discuss part-time jobs and internships that may be available that relate to their career goals."
- "The student wants to study abroad next fall. I recommended that they meet with the International Center to discuss their options."



Appropriate vs Inappropriate Notes

Inappropriate	Appropriate
Subjective Sentiments	
“I doubt the student’s ability to succeed in this major.”	“I discussed my concern with the student about their performance in fundamental course requirements in this major.”
“The student is clueless about what they want to major in and is all over the place.”	“The student is still exploring majors and expressed interest in law enforcement, anthropology, and sport administration. They will use the next semester to explore these interests further.”
Sensitive Information	
“The student might have a learning disability. I referred them to the DRC.”	“The student disclosed that they believe they may have a learning disability related to their Math/Quantitative Reasoning difficulties, and they gave me permission to document this in the notes. I referred the student to the Disability Resource Center.”
“The student is bi-polar and stopped taking their medicine. I recommended that they seek help.”	“I recommended the student to seek psychological assistance through the Counseling Center.”
“Student was hospitalized for hepatitis.”	“Student missed 8 weeks of the semester due to illness. They will meet with the Student Care Team to discuss a compassionate withdraw.”
“Student indicated she is considering filing a sexual harassment charge against one of her classmates.”	“Students shared personal matters and I provided contact information for the Dean of Students and Counseling Center as an added support.”

Information that is personal and sensitive should not be shared unless student permission is obtained. When obtaining consent from a student to document personal information, be sure to make it clear that the information will be available to other staff members across the university. Staff members may wish to keep these types of notes filed/stored in a secured location that only they have access to.



DO	DON'T
<p>Be specific in describing discussion and agreements</p> <p>Include general information about students</p> <p>Record recommended courses and why</p> <p>Note referrals, including referrals referenced by student Notate</p> <p>NO SHOW in advising summaries when a student fails to attend</p> <p>Use professional judgement on information pertinent to student support</p> <p>Be mindful that the student can request to see the information at any time</p>	<p>Write in code</p> <p>Write subjective</p> <p>Include personal information that is sensitive</p> <p>Include or add in a diagnosis</p> <p>Include your personal thoughts about the student</p>

Per Title IX and the Clery Act, there are instances where faculty/staff/administrators are mandated to report information to the Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX coordinator. More information on Title IX and mandatory reporting can be found at <https://louisville.edu/titleix/>.

Documenting those instances in CardSmart, a collaborative platform among faculty and staff, is not required or expected. Reach out to the Title IX Coordinator directly.