**Academic Advising & Mentoring in Higher Education:**

**A Caribbean Perspective**

**MARCH 22-24, 2021**

Globally, changing educational landscapes present new challenges for sustaining student retention and success in higher education. COVID-19 has certainly raised new concerns, set new environments and exacerbated existing situations confronting students and staff. No doubt, some of these changes have intensified the vulnerabilities of students and the challenges of working through higher education.

With the shift in context, the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors and mentors, as well as, the effect of these on their wellbeing have also come into question. How we treat with these new developments, while attending to pre-existing trepidations around advising and mentoring, call for needed reflection on our changing landscape and engagement of our key stakeholders who are willing to share their experiences and strategies for forging ahead.

As a scholarly and practical imperative therefore, this symposium treats with the many questions related to academic advising and mentoring practices across institutions of higher education, the challenges of context (history and culture), and, the implications of these for both students and staff. These discussions are particularly important for how institution (re)envision and (re)configure models, practices, and philosophies around academic advising and mentoring. The symposium is therefore intended to:

1. Situate the scholarly imperative of academic advising and mentoring in the Caribbean
2. Reflect on how COVID-19 has altered the landscape for and practices around advising and mentoring within higher education
3. Explore different models and practices of academic advising and mentoring in the Caribbean
4. Consider the impact of institutional culture on the design, implementation of, and practices around academic advising and mentoring
5. Connect issues of academic advising and mentoring to the wellbeing of advisors and mentors within academia.
6. Explore strategies for improving academic advising within institutions of higher education in the region
7. Consider best practices on academic advising and mentoring
8. Connect and support advisors and mentors in the region
9. Give visibility and voice to the stakeholders who are involved in/affected by the academic advising and mentoring processes within HE.

**Sub-Topics:**

1.  **Academic Advising Models, Institutional Culture and Advising Practices**: Where the notion of academic advising remains somewhat contentious, many questions remain. Within this sub-theme, we address some of the following questions: How do academic advising models address issues such as programme management, career planning & development, and campus navigation? To what extent do existing academic advising models attend to the needs of high achievers or students from diverse populations e.g. the differently abled, regional and international students, transfer students, the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) community, undergraduate and graduate level students? How can context act as hindrance/enabler to advising practices? How do institutional cultures impact approaches to academic advising and mentoring?

2.  **Mentorship thinking and practice:** The changing academic landscape also calls for examinations of the thinking and practice around mentoring models. Given such, we encourage submissions therefore that speak to, among others: How mentoring is constructed and integrated within higher education. How do changing landscapes affect the practice of mentoring? What are the existing processes that define institutional practices within a given context? How do institutional politics influence mentoring practices? How do perceptions of mentoring (as a process) influence practices? What are the challenges or obstacles to mentoring within Caribbean institutions of higher education? What do best practices tell us about institutions’ requirements?

3**. Well-being: Students & Advisors:** Whatever the model or approach to academic advising, the wellbeing of students and advisors remain at the centre of these processes. Some of the questions to be addressed within this theme include: How do advisors and/or mentors address some of the personal (mental, financial, relational, academic), social (co-curricular activities, recreational activities, peer influence), institutional (lack of student support, integration and engagement) struggles in academic advising and mentoring practices and/or models? To what extent do the academic advising and mentoring processes impact the well-being of students and staff? What are some of the opportunities and threats to students’ wellbeing under current institutional context? What strategies can be employed at an institutional level to address all of these concerns?

**SUBMISSIONS**The virtual symposium will be delivered over **three-half day sessions** and will cater to the following:

**PAPER PRESENTATIONS:** 10 minutes per individual presentation, concept papers, conceptual papers and/or reports of empirical work related to the symposium sub-themes.

**PANEL PRESENTATIONS**: 60 minutes for each panel. These are interactive sessions, guided by a moderator, that are geared towards engaging presenters and participants within critical discussions related to the topic of academic advising and mentoring within higher education. The entire panel, including the Chair, will be no less than four persons, but no more than five persons.

**CREATIVE PRESENTATIONS:** 5-10 minutes per presenter. Through the inclusion of creative sessions, students, staff, and other institutional stakeholders will present on issues related to academic advising and mentoring within higher education, using alternative forms of expression; including, monologue, dance, ex-tempo, rapso, and art, just to name a few.