



## COUNSELING, ADVISING & RETENTION SERVICES

**Location:**  
3rd Floor Student Center

**Hours:**  
Monday-Thursday: 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.  
Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Academic Foundations Program**  
(616) 234-3249  
[www.grcc.edu/academicfoundations](http://www.grcc.edu/academicfoundations)

**Academic Tutorial and  
Testing Services**  
**Tutorial Services**  
232 Learning Resource Center  
(616) 234-4149  
[www.grcc.edu/academicsupport](http://www.grcc.edu/academicsupport)

**Testing Services**  
325 Student Center  
(616) 234-3413  
[www.grcc.edu/assessment](http://www.grcc.edu/assessment)

**Counseling and Career Center**  
(616) 234-3900  
[www.grcc.edu/counseling](http://www.grcc.edu/counseling)

**Disability Support Services**  
(616) 234-4140  
[www.grcc.edu/disability](http://www.grcc.edu/disability)

**Occupational Support Programs**  
(616) 234-4155  
[www.grcc.edu/occupationalsupport](http://www.grcc.edu/occupationalsupport)

**TRiO/Student Support Services**  
(616) 234-4150  
[www.grcc.edu/ss](http://www.grcc.edu/ss)

## I D E A

IDEA is a four-stage student plan of action for utilizing GRCC resources to achieve your career and educational goals!

### GRCC ADVISING MISSION

Academic advising is a teaching and learning process dedicated to students success. It engages students in developing a plan to realize their educational, career, and life goals.

### ACADEMIC ADVISING DESCRIPTION

Academic advising is a collaborative partnership between students and their advisors. The primary focus of academic advising is for students to:

1. Demonstrate self-understanding and self-acceptance through value clarification, understanding abilities, interests, and limitations.
2. Examine life goals by relating interests, skills, abilities, and values to careers, the world of work, and the nature and purpose of higher education.
3. Develop an educational plan consistent with life goals and objectives.

Academic advising helps students synthesize and contextualize all of their educational experiences at GRCC, from application to graduation, to maximize the benefit of these experiences as they move into the larger world.

### Did you know?

#### Winter 2010 Registration Dates (current and returning students)

Students who have earned 36 or more credits  
**Register October 22**

Students who have earned 24 or more credits  
**Register October 27**

Students who have earned 12 or more credits  
**Register November 2**

Students who have earned 0-11 credits  
**Register November 5**

Open Enrollment (new students) – **November 9**

Open Enrollment (early college) – **November 11**

Winter 2010 Tuition Due Date – **December 9**

**Academic Advising Day and Transfer Fair**  
Tuesday, October 27, 2009  
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Wisner-Bottrall Applied Technology Center  
• Come talk with representatives from  
over 25 transfer schools as well as discuss  
fields of study with **GRCC** departments.

**Thanksgiving Break** – November 25th-27th

**Exam Week** – December 14th

**Winter 2009 Semester** begins  
Thursday, January 7th, 2010



### Tore Skogseth

I am Tore Skogseth, and I was fortunate enough to start at GRCC about one year ago as a counselor in the Counseling and Career Center. I was born and raised in Norway, which explains the name – and to help with the pronunciations, think of it as being spelled Touda.

Ten years ago I packed up my belongings and moved from Trondheim, Norway, to Robinson, a small town in Southern Illinois on the Indiana border. That was also the home of Lincoln Trail College (LTC), a part of Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, which is where I earned my associate degree. When I started at LTC, I was newly married, new to the United States, and I had been out of school for a long time. I was nervous about the whole experience and I worried about being the oldest student in the room. What I found was a welcoming atmosphere that helped me succeed, and I was proud to be selected to become a peer counselor and a tutor.

After moving to Michigan in 2001, I started working at Montcalm Community College as a Student Services Assistant, and that is where I decided not only to become a counselor, but to become a counselor at a community college. I earned a BA in Family Life Education and MA in Counseling from Spring Arbor University, and while I left MCC to work at Alma College, I still worked with community college students as a transfer student recruiter and I completed my counseling internship back at MCC.

While much has happened in the ten years since I walked through the doors at Lincoln Trail College for the first time, I still remember exactly how lost I felt when I came in to do the placement test and the first time I walked into a classroom – and the wonderful sense of accomplishment I had when I walked across the stage to receive my diploma. As a counselor here at GRCC, it is my goal to enable our students to walk across the stage in the Ford Fieldhouse as college graduates. It truly is a great feeling.

## IMAGINE:

Is attending college a brand new experience for you? Feeling a bit overwhelmed about all there is to learn and know to be a successful college student? How about the question: “What am I going to major in?” Yikes! Be assured that you are NOT ALONE. These are very common concerns for most college students.

I often hear this statement from students...“I don’t know my major or what my career goal is...so I’m just going to take my basics...my core classes, and then I’ll decide. If this sounds like you...that’s GREAT. What a solid starting plan. While there isn’t a right or wrong way to get started...there is definitely a wiser way. So relax and listen to my suggestions:

Answer for yourself: Why am I choosing to go to college? What am I hoping to accomplish? What subjects do I enjoy? What skill areas do I already have?

Attend a workshop on choosing a career or exploring a major.

Sign up for an individual career counseling appointment. Talk with a GRCC career counselor about your future plans or perhaps take an interest assessment to jumpstart some ideas.

This is YOUR time to imagine your life at Grand Rapids Community College and beyond. Be an information and knowledge SPONGE. Take it one day at a time. Be open to all that is new. Set some goals. And... let us help you answer these questions and assist you in creating a plan for this important time in your life.

### Contributor:

Jill Woller-Sullivan, Counselor –  
Counseling & Career Center





## DEVELOP:

DEVELOP a portfolio. Designate a folder or notebook to store the information you gather during this stage of the plan for reaching your educational goal. Quick access to this information will save you time later as you begin the decision making portion of your academic plan.

When you talk with your counselor, consider jotting down some notes about your conversation. If you know what major you plan to pursue, make a copy of the curriculum guide so you have a list of needed classes. You may find this information in your GRCC catalog, GRCC transfer guide, or online at our website or that of your intended transfer school. It's not unusual to be unsure of your educational goal as you begin your academic journey. Consider a career workshop or meet with a career counselor. There is no charge to students for these services and they can be as in-depth as you would like to make them. Another possibility is a career decision making class like CLS 101 or CLS 110, which is taken for credit and does appear on your transcript.

Consider attending the Academic Advising and Transfer Fair which is offered once each fall and winter semester. At this time many 4-year colleges and universities across Michigan gather on our campus to meet directly with students. This is an excellent opportunity to ask questions and gather printed information about transfer admissions requirements, educational programs, scholarships, athletics, clubs and organizations, etc; it's a chance to shop around without leaving town.

Take advantage of the workshops offered by our Counseling, Advising & Retention Services which are available without cost to students. You can develop helpful strategies for preparing for classroom tests, or reduce your stress by examining its sources and learning some relaxation and coping strategies.

Your Professors have office hours, a time specifically designated to meet with students one-on-one. This is a great opportunity for you to ask questions about information in your textbook or the lecture that you don't understand, clarify an assignment, or just to further discuss a point you found particularly interesting. It's also a chance to ask more about that professor's field of study, if it is an area of interest to you. What does he or she find most interesting about this subject? What fields of employment are associated with a degree in this area and what are the educational degree requirements?

Tutoring support is available on campus in a variety of formats. If you are struggling to master the material in a class, consider tutorial support. It is always a good idea to seek help early, while there is still time to improve your performance.

Finally, in these economic times, some labor market research can be an effective tool in developing an academic direction. There is a wealth of timely information available online regarding an extensive number of career choices. Is the area you are considering increasing, decreasing or remaining unchanged in terms of employment prospects? What degree or training is required? What personal characteristics are a good fit for this career? What are the working conditions? Where are the jobs and are you willing to relocate if necessary? What is the salary range? Important questions to consider as you chose your academic path and prospective career.

The first step is as simple as making an appointment to meet with a GRCC counselor!

**Contributor:**

Anne Sherman, Counselor –  
Occupational & Disability Services

## EXPLORE:

Sometimes it takes folks a long time before they develop a clear picture in their mind about how they'd like to see their educational career unfold. Gaining an understanding of how the components of education fit together for you as an individual takes time. What's the right balance between education for personal growth and education as a tool to enter the workforce? Answering this question can be the most exciting and challenging times in college. This is a time to take classes that you might not normally take, to do things that you might not normally do and to meet people who can change your perspective. The decision to get involved rests with each of us as individuals. Reaching out in new directions and stretching ourselves to find our own limits is the opportunity that GRCC offers.

The list of classes that GRCC offers seems endless and the opportunities to get involved on campus through clubs and organizations, student employment, or even movie night on the commons are just as varied. Taking the time to explore these opportunities can dramatically change your direction. Samantha started at GRCC as a music student. She was, by all accounts, a talented musician and a hard worker. In her spare time, Samantha thought that she might take a math class. She had heard from her parents that it was probably a good idea to take some type of math class "just to be well rounded" and so she did. Her experience

in algebra was very good. So good, in fact, that she became a math tutor. After tutoring for just one semester, Samantha decided that she wanted to teach math. What a shift from music! While Samantha didn't give up on music and still plays in a band and takes the occasional music class, her focus changed because she took the time to explore.

Discovering the right path for you as an individual is at the very core of the educational experience. It can be challenging, exciting and even frightening. Changing from music to math was all of those things for Samantha but in the end, uncovering her hidden passion for teaching and for math will serve her well throughout her life. Asking professors, counselors, staff members and peers about their experiences about what they like to do and actively exploring things that you like to do through a club, a campus job, or taking electives that just sound interesting can help you find your hidden passion. The key to find the right path is simple. Reach out. Get involved. Ask questions. Explore the world around you.

**Contributor:**

Raju Hegde, Associate Director –  
Academic Tutorial & Testing Services

## ACHIEVE:

The Achieve stage is the culmination of what you've been working toward; the end result. Whether you came to GRCC to get an Associate's Degree, to transfer to a 4-year school, to gain a certificate or to get additional educational experience, the Achieve stage is where you show off all you have learned. Through your experiences here you have developed skills in time-management, communication, interpersonal relations, critical thinking and much more. Transferring to another school or starting your career is a major life transition. Put the skills you've gained to good use as you navigate that transition.

For those transferring to a new school, you'll want to be aware of application deadlines for admission and scholarships. Planning ahead and getting information early is the best way to achieve a successful transition. It's never too early to start! If this is your first semester at GRCC, start talking to those transfer schools as early as the Advising Day and Transfer Fair this fall. If transferring is on your agenda this year, call a counselor at the new institution to verify you're on track.

For those going into the job market, hone in on your communication skills and utilize campus resources to help sharpen those skills. Creating a resume and cover letter isn't a one night

process. It takes a great deal of time to write, edit and tailor your information to specific positions. Ask multiple people to review your work and be thankful for any constructive criticism you receive. They might provide the one suggestion that helps you get in the door! Practice your interview skills. Whether you've interviewed for many positions in the past or this is your first time, we can all use practice. Answering a question out loud and on the spot is much harder than it seems when we have time to think and formulate our choice of words perfectly. Have someone critic your nonverbal skills or video tape yourself so that you can watch for things like the amount of eye contact you make or if you say "um" excessively. Take advantage of the services offered in Student Employment Services. In a tough job market, you need to put some real effort into preparing yourself to achieve the job you deserve.

Achievement is about success. It's the point where your hard work pays off and you reach a goal. It allows you to celebrate what you've accomplished and set your eyes on your next dream.

**Contributor:**

Sara Dorer, Associate Director –  
Student Conduct & Student Satisfaction Initiatives