

ACTIVITY 16

Getting to Know Me: Preparing for the First Mini-Conference

Purpose: Reflect on interests, concerns, passions, and goals for the first round of individual mini-conferences.

ADVISOR NOTES:

1. Understand the Purpose and Value of Mini-Conferences

Before conducting your first round of mini-conferences, read **Making Space for Mini-Conferences** on page 5 to better understand the value of establishing them as a routine that helps support the academic, social, and personal lives of your advisees.

2. Build in Time for Mini-Conferences

Try to conduct your initial round of mini-conferences early in the year so your first one-on-one interaction with each advisee is not about academic issues or grades. The amount of time it takes to conduct each round of mini-conferences depends on the size of your group and the length of your advisory meeting. Advisors with 7–10 advisees will be able to spend more time in each mini-conference than advisors with 15–20 advisees. Ideally, you will be able to spend three to five minutes with each advisee. While you are mini-conferencing, the others can work in small groups on activities such as bio-poems, life road maps, or discussion of a reading or video. **Making Space for Mini-Conferences** has additional ideas for activities that work well during mini-conferences.

PROCEDURE:

1. Explain the Purpose of Mini-Conferences

- Let your advisees know that in addition to opening and closing routines, mini-conferences are another routine that will help you know them and be able to support them as they strive to reach their goals this year. While they should always feel free to schedule a conference with you or a counselor outside of advisory, you will be building in time during advisory to check in with them about their academic goals, personal goals, and social goals. The first round of mini-conferences provides an opportunity for you to get to know advisees a bit better as individuals.

APPROXIMATE TIME:

30+ minutes

MATERIALS: **HANDOUT****Getting to Know Me**

- To prepare for the conference, explain to the group that they will each be completing a short questionnaire. Let them know that you will collect it after the conference because there probably won't be time to discuss all of their responses and you want to be able to see the responses to all of the questions.

2. Prepare for and Conduct Mini-Conferences

- Pass out and have advisees complete the handout **Getting to Know Me**.
- After your advisees have finished their reflections, either start your first round of mini-conferences after the group has settled into a new activity, or have advisees store their handouts in their advisory folders if you plan start mini-conferences in a future meeting.



Getting to Know Me

Directions: Respond to the following prompts in two to three sentences, giving a brief explanation of your answer. Then put a star by three prompts that you want to talk about in your first mini-conference. If there is time, you and your advisor can talk about more, or you can come back to the other topics in future mini-conferences.

1. A highlight of my summer vacation was . . . because . . .

2. When I have free time on the weekend, you can find me . . .

3. This year, I am most excited about . . . because . . .

4. This year, I am most nervous about . . . because . . .

5. I would describe my personal style as . . . because . . .

6. I would like to learn more about (does not have to be academic) . . . because . . .

7. The best thing about being a student at _____ (school's name) is . . . because . . .

8. The worst thing about being a student at _____ (school's name) is . . . because . . .

9. In order to best support me as my advisor this year, you should know that . . .