>> Welcome to “Going Online” with Oregon State University Ecampus, a podcast series highlighting resources and tools for online learners across the globe. I'm Eddie Rodriguez, the Student Engagement Program Manager at Oregon State University Ecampus, which serves more than 13,000 online learners annually through the delivery of 100 plus online degrees and programs.

In this series, I'm joined by my colleague Rachael Guenthner, Entry and Transition Advisor at South Seattle College, and former OSU Ecampus Student Success Coach. We're glad you're here. In this episode, we're connecting with Scott Harrington, computer science advisor at Oregon State University. We'll discuss academic advising, what it is and how it impacts your success, let's get into it.

Welcome back to Going Online with Oregon State University Ecampus, Rachael. How are you doing today?

>> Fantastic. How are you doing today, Eddie?

>> I'm doing great, I'm getting through, it's currently, what, fall term And yeah, kind of getting through things, pretty excited for today's guest, where we'll get to hopefully learn a little bit more about a particular service that I think is very valuable for a lot of our students.

>> I would definitely say the essential service of any student at a university. Without further ado, though, I want to introduce our guests because I'm very excited that he's here. Scott, would you like to introduce yourself?

>> Yeah, thank you very much for having me. My name is Scott Harrington, I am an academic advisor over in the College of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, our largest major here at OSU, our largest department.

I have been in that role for only about five months now, so I'm a newer advisor. But I have been here at Oregon State for about three years as an employee, and was previously a student here as well in the tiny religious studies program. So hopefully, I have a little bit to offer on kind of both ends there.

>> Bit on all sides of the OSU equation, I always find it super interesting former students that transition to employee roles and how that changes your perspective because, Eddie, you graduated from Oregon State, correct?

>> Yeah, I did, I also am a OSU alum, and I know we've talked about this before already, but yeah, with a history degree.

So I think under the same sort of umbrella, College of Liberal Arts over there, great college over here at Oregon State, but yeah, absolutely OSU, beavers through and through.

>> Wow, that should be the tag, beaver through and through, but let's get rolling, thank you for that introduction, Scott.

I guess start things off with a very intense philosophical question, but also a brass tacks question, how would you define academic advising? What is it to possible prospective students? How would you describe this service?

>> So that really heavily depends. I mean, it's different here than it is maybe another university, different than what would be at a community college.

Just how things are kind of spread out in the things that we do. And maybe in some other places, it's multiple different roles, but here I would say it's sort of your one-stop shop for support. We have an idea of when we're going into appointments, of what we're going to talk about, but a lot of things that we end up talking about depends on the reason that a student scheduled the appointment.

So we might have an idea of what we want to do, and we might actually only spend like five minutes on that because maybe the student has a completely different idea of what they actually want to talk about. And so we really are there to hear whatever that may be, whether that's not just academic advising but interpersonal issues with other students.

Or with professors or maybe there's something going on in their personal life they want to talk to somebody about, they don't really know where to go, we're willing and able to hear all those sorts of things. And the kinds of resolutions we can offer are really widely varied depending on what the situation is.

But if you don't know where to go or you don't have anybody to talk to, your academic advisor is kind of the first place that I would start.

>> So it sounds like, as you were saying, academic advising looks different in a lot of different places, and I imagine this also looks different even just within the institution here at Oregon State itself.

You mentioned specifically academic advising, can you talk to me a little bit what exactly that means or what that looks like in terms of what does it mean to advise students?

>> Yeah, so a lot of our policies are very complex just across the university, across the college.

We have college-specific polices as well, and a lot of times students don't have the time, the energy, or the easiest time finding some of these policies and how to navigate them. And so if somebody comes to us with a question about our curriculum, like hey, what classes should I take, or maybe if a certain class is going to be offered during a certain time.

Schedule of classes only goes out so far, but we have our internal projections based on conversations we've had with faculty of kind of what we expect to be offered in the next year or two. So we have a little bit more insight information than maybe just what's available on the website.

And we're also able to help find information if somebody's having a difficult time. So even if we don't know the answer off the top of our heads, we usually know where we can look or we have all of our other advisors and we can ask. That can help us locate that maybe a little bit quicker or easier than a student just kind of poking around on their own.

And so basically, anything to do with classes, academic resources, tutoring, just that sort of area is really what the academic part of the academic advising is. Any questions about eschewing a class or what's going to happen if I withdraw from this term, questions like that.

>> Yeah, and for our listeners out there, can you define what SU is?

>> Yeah, so it's satisfactory or unsatisfactory, so pass-fail at other colleges, where if you are taking a course outside of your major, you don't want it to affect your GPA. You can do the satisfactory or unsatisfactory grading up to a certain point in the academic term, where if you get above a certain percentage in the class, you get satisfactory, below, it's unsatisfactory, but it doesn't affect your GPA.

>> Gotcha, good to know, and you had mentioned about kind of class projections, having those conversations with faculty. Something that I think makes Oregon State distinct in the sense with its advising services is that academic advisors are commonly in the department. So well, you see Ecampus students, Scott, you're technically an employee and staff member of the, I can't even name the college, there's too many E's in it, but the computer science department who you work under and those are the meetings that you attend.

So you really do have a lot more kind of inside baseball for students to work with. And that's why I often tell folks as a success coach to talk to their academic advisor because you are essentially kind of a representative for the department in a lot of ways in those conversations.

Is that right?

>> Yeah.

>> For sure, yeah, that is probably different than how it works at some other institutions, where people used to ask me this when I used to work here in Ecampus, are you located on campus? Are you in like a call center, who am I speaking with right now?

And it's sort of a similar thing with advising, where some other universities maybe have advisors that are working remotely, living out of state, maybe they've never visited campus. I'm sure they're just as helpful as well, but we do kind of have a little bit of an advantage being within the department, our offices are right across from some faculty offices.

We go to meetings regularly where the faculty are discussing curriculum changes and things like that. And not everything in those meetings is kind of pertinent to advising, but we do get a little bit of extra knowledge that maybe some folks in other institutions don't have, or the people on campus don't have.

Because we are able to kind of get really up and close with just everything that's going on in the department.

>> That's awesome. I mean, it's good to know that you are in some ways really involved. I mean obviously you're involved in the student's sort of academic journey and in terms of helping them kind of maybe navigate a lot of those complex policies that you were talking about earlier to the curriculum.

And kind of maybe figuring out what sort of their degree timeline might look like. But also that you are communicating with others and kind of having that context. Because as I feel like you're kind of alluding to, students can come to you with a lot of different questions about a lot of different things.

And so I imagine knowing a little bit about everything can serve you, certainly just help facilitate and maybe ease some of those anxieties and worries that sometimes maybe come up when they connect with you. My next question for you is, again, I feel like you've already talked a little bit about it in terms of topic.

But what sort of things can students expect during maybe that first meeting with you when then they connect in our case, as an online student?

>> Yeah. Sort of, maybe this is jumping ahead a little bit, but cause you mentioned specifically for online students. Advising really looks the same for online students and on-campus students right now.

Because most of our on-campus students in our department, specifically computer science majors, choose to come to appointments through Zoom. We've been offering that option since COVID. And only about 13% of the students that I've met so far have chosen to come into my office. The majority of them choose zoom and that's the same modality that Ecampus students are defaulting to.

And so those appointments really look similar between the two. And as for what you can expect, the sort of, again, we do things a little bit differently in our department. So with the group advising, it's a really quick like hey, we're going to get you set up for your first term.

Then we're going to have you come back again to kind of go more in depth as to what your goals are and things like that. And that's what we do when you actually meet with your primary advisor is. We do care and we want to know who you are, why you're here and kind of what your goals are.

And so, part of that appointment is asking those kinds of questions. Hey, I'm interested in you, tell me a little bit about yourself. We're potentially going to be working together through a couple of years, through the program and we like to have that background knowledge. And then planning out your next year of classes and usually that's a really rough idea based on availability and what people's goals are and things like that.

But those are kind of the two biggest things that we touch on in the first appointment. And then we always like to leave room for any sort of questions that people have. Because usually people have a lot, especially if they're a newer student. And that's a little bit of a difference in our department as well as first year students meet with a completely separate team in our department.

And then once you get up to the second year or later, you start meeting with advisors from your primary college. Whether that's computer science, electrical engineering, nuclear engineering, or kind of whatever your specialty is. And so, there is a little bit of a transition period for at least our students from their first year and beyond.

>> And sorry, Rachael. And just one more quick little follow up here. Why that structure because it sounds like, yeah, you've mentioned this a couple times already. Primary advisor for their actual degree, but then it sounds like there's another sort of initial advisor. Can you kind of describe the differences and maybe just a little clarity as to why your college is set up that way?

>> Yeah, we do this thing that's called engineering plus. And so, it's a newer change that's been made within the last couple of years. Where all of our first year engineers regardless of which department, they end up specializing in or focusing on, they all take the same classes.

So we have a series of engineering 100, 102 and 103. All of our engineering students take that. Then they're usually taking back core courses alongside that. And we have a separate group that only works with first year students because their curriculum is so similar. They're able to serve students regardless of kind of where they're coming from.

And that team is very large comparatively to some of our more specific major teams. And the reason that is just kind of serve them best because they know all about the first year, they have the capacity to work with that many students. And then once students need a little bit more specialized support in actual computer science or nuclear engineering or whatever their specialty may be.

They transition in their second year once they decide this is the type of engineering I want to do. Into meeting with their primary advisor who ideally is the one who's going to stick with them for the rest of their program. The advisors occasionally do change because we're bringing new advisors on.

We need to kind of even out the workload between everybody that students are always able to continue meeting with the same advisor they've been meeting with, if that's their preference

>> Yeah, thank you for that explanation. That's really helpful. With that, do you, as students are kind of assigned to you in the system?

How often are students required to meet with their primary advisor?

>> So for us, when you are coming in as, say, a transfer student, you have that initial group registration with us where we have 30, 40 people come in at the same time. We split all of our advisors off into Zoom rooms.

And then we're pretty rapidly kind of getting people set up with a first year plan, answering any really important questions that they might have. And then that's when we're having them later scheduled their meeting with our primary advisor. And that meeting is usually, for most students the only one that they need to have.

So, we have them come in during their first term to just kind of check in on how things are going really early. Hey, are there any issues that you're running into immediately that we might be able to help resolve before it becomes an actual problem? And then usually that's where we give them their registration pin for the whole year.

But in our department, it also goes by last name. So, if a student comes in, their first term is in the fall, they might meet with us sometime in the summer, meet with us sometime in the fall. And then have to also meet with us sometime in the winter.

Just based on sort of how that is split out. Otherwise, if students are doing just fine, they're not running into any issues, they're not on any sort of academic warning or anything like that. You usually just get emailed your registration pin and you don't have to meet with an advisor for the rest of the year.

You're always welcome too of course, though our schedules are open even during the breaks.

>> Yeah, absolutely. And with the group registration sessions that you have mentioned, I think it's important to note for the listeners. That is, specific to the college of engineering on boarding process that is not true for every single program.

In fact, I think it's the only person that does group registration as I looked, Eddie. And that process is super unique new, tell us why that's kind of the initial setup to get folks on boarded?

>> It's honestly just the number of students that we have. We're the largest program here at OSU, we have the largest number of Ecampus students.

The majority of our students are Ecampus students, many of them postbacks. And with that number of people is more realistic and more efficient and effective. Even for the student to be able to get their course schedule and know what they're actually going to be taking a little bit sooner.

To just have that amount of people come in, and kind of get their appointment through in the first hour or two. Usually that's how long they run is an hour to two hours long, those group registrations. And we can get 30 or 40 people kind of through the process in that amount of time.

Whereas if that was a half hour appointment, you're only gonna be meeting with four people, maximum in that time. So it really helps us serve the number of students that we have, and also to get them information a little bit sooner. Instead of saying, hey, you have to come schedule an appointment with me two weeks out.

You have these different sessions you can register for, and then you know. What you're going to have kind of at the end of that appointment.

>> A lot more flexibility, a lot more to work with in regards to availability, which is how I pitch group registration sessions to incoming students, is it's an opportunity to just get what you need and get set up to register for classes with them.

The intentional follow up of, you'll have a primary advisor assigned to you that you're able to speak directly to and work individually with. I think that it's always a good point of clarification that it's like, we want to ensure that folks are able to start right away, but that personalized, individualized support is there for you when you need it, when you want it.

>> Yeah, yeah, and during those group registration sessions, students might meet with any advisor. We have our entire team there as long as they're not out for the day or anything, but generally, everyone is going to be all hands on deck for that. And so you might meet with an advisor that, unless you choose to, you might never actually talk to that advisor again.

And so that's why we really don't dive too heavily into the let me get to know you kind of phase during that, because you really want to do that with the advisor that you're going to be meeting with. You don't want to have to be repeating your life story to multiple people as you kind of go through the process.

And it really helps develop a stronger relationship to do that once you're meeting with the person that you're going to be working with for the next three, four years, however long you're here.

>> So you mentioned especially early on when students are kind of just getting started, they're getting into that group orientation, you mentioned that especially for Ecampus ,a majority of them are post-bacc students.

Again, just more of a clarifying thing, are they automatically getting connected to a primary advisor after that, since they're not technically first year students in the program?

>> Yeah, yeah, so for first year students transitioning to the second year, sort of once they've made that decision, once they've gotten that sophomore standing, they get assigned an advisor.

They get an email that says, hey, here's your advisor, you have to schedule a meeting with them to get your pin. Let us know if you need anything. It's got a lot of detail and different links and things in that email that goes out. And then for post-bacc students, it's very similar.

They come to the group registration, and then very shortly after that, they get a similar email that says, hey, you've now been assigned your advisor, here they are, here's where you can find their profiles. Schedule an appointment with them, let us know if you have any questions kind of thing.

And so they get very similar communication and that's a similar timeline. We actually do the advisor assignments at the same time for all of our students, regardless of what their status is or whether they're Ecampus or on campus.

>> Great, yeah, I appreciate that. Wow, yeah, you all have very much a well defined process, especially given that it's such a large program or college, I should say.

It's exciting to see how much effort you all are putting into kind of design such a process that meets a lot of students, and then it's informing them about all these different things. Because I certainly, thinking through, I was like, gosh, I would be a little nervous, but as you've explained it, it's nice to know that there are these checkpoints along the way.

Another thing that you mentioned that I think just kind of I see it as important to know is this idea of kind of building a relationship, especially when you obviously get to, if I was a student, getting to my primary advisor. Can you talk to me a little bit about what that looks like, or sort of the value of kind of trying to establish a relationship, that advisor to student relationship, why that might be important?

>> Yeah, so, I mean, I would say it's especially important for Ecampus students who are maybe lacking some of the same connections that they might have gotten if they were here on campus. It's a lot harder to kind of make connections with people if you're not seeing them face to face or you're not regularly running into them in the hall or anything like that.

And your advisor can really be, again, kind of your one-stop shop for support in a lot of different ways. And I think it's really valuable to have a consistent person, because you're going to be jumping between classes, different professors, some of them maybe communicate with that professor a lot, sometimes maybe you don't communicate with them all that much.

Same thing with your classmates, especially if you're Ecampus and unless you're kind of reaching out to people outside of class. It's maybe a little bit difficult to be running into the same people over and over again and things like that. And so I think it's really helpful to have a consistent person.

You have the feeling that they know a little bit about you, whatever you're comfortable sharing, and that they care kind of about your journey, where, unfortunately, in not every instance, it might not feel like that. I've talked with students pretty recently who are like, hey, I need to talk to somebody, I don't feel like I can talk to my professor.

I don't have any classmates that I'm close with. I just don't know where to go. And so having kind of established that relationship over a longer period of time, it makes students more comfortable in kind of telling us what's going on, so that we can help them resolve those issues, whatever it might be.

We don't know what's going on with students until they tell us. I mean, we can see grades and, Degrees and things like that. But we're not actively checking on every little second of what's going on in your day and send you emails like, hey, you did bad on this assignment, you need to come see me.

We're not monitoring people in a really tiny way like that. And so we need people to tell us kind of what's going on in order to help them in establishing that relationship, giving them that feeling of comfort that it's okay to tell us those things. We're not going to be sharing their business with everybody, we're just there to help them really kind of supports that back and forth and gives us the ability to offer whatever resources we can.

Whether that's just advising or referrals to Disability Access Services, or any other department like that, that might have some sort of extra support that we're not able to offer.

>> Yeah, and I think it's important to note to folks out there that for most departments and programs, you're required to speak to an academic advisor at some point in the journey.

For Computer Science and the College of Engineering, there's a couple maintain checkpoints. For others, it's like you got to meet once a year. And the important thing about them that I would just echo is that an academic advisor might be the only person you ever talk to at Ecampus, they might be it.

And so they really are a lifeline and essential service, it's the essential service of Ecampus, of any higher education institution, is that's your person for a lot of things. And ultimately, I like to remind people and also just say out loud that folks don't become academic advisors because they don't care about students.

And for academic advisors, they're able to show up, whether it's with information to answer questions, to listen, or to be just a place of and then offer direction or referrals to other on campus resources or other campus resources. People that are academic advisors want to show up for students in a way that makes sense for them, and what you're able to invest in that relationship is what you get out of it.

And it's great to establish that, build that rapport with that person. Even if you feel like you don't need something, don't be afraid to reach out. I've never had an academic advisor say to me, I can't believe that person emailed me to say hi and introduce themselves, never heard anything like that.

And then it is a place to kind of do business. Academic advising can be very exchangeable, very business transaction, if people need that, if they want that in the moment. But ultimately, academic advisors want to care for students to the best that they are able to. And I think that's something I try to remind folks about when they're like, my academic advisor, I'm like, they're there to care about you and they are there to show up for you in the way that makes the most sense to you.

So I'm really glad that you said that.

>> Yeah, and I would say too, I'm talking about getting to know people and kind of establishing that relationship. But really, the extent that that happens is up to the student, especially in People in our post-bacc program are working professionals.

Sometimes they're 50, 60, 70 years old. They're people who've been in the workforce for a really long time doing something else. They're coming back to studying computer science. Depending on what they want in that meeting, if they just want to get to their classes and they want to just kind of get a schedule and then be done, that's fine.

We're still going to ask how you're doing and everything, but we're not going to be pushy and be like, okay, tell me about yourself, tell me about yourself. We're not going to keep asking you questions that you don't feel comfortable or you just don't want to answer. And I mentioned those students specifically because they've already been through school.

They've gone to college before. They don't want to feel like they're being talked down to and they're being kind of babysat or anything like that. They're people who are just here to do their thing, and some people want to talk more than others, and that's fine. But if you just want to come in, get your pin, leave, that's totally up to you.

If you want to come and tell us what's going on in your classes, what's going on in your day, how your family's doing, we'll listen, we're happy to talk about all of those things. It's just whatever you are kind of comfortable offering in that spectrum.

>> That's great, knowing that the College of Engineering has someone like you, Scott, that's awesome.

Because I think oftentimes we have heard from our e-campus students that there are instances where they feel like they're being treated a little more as if they were that kind of traditional first year, straight out of high school students. Knowing that, especially within your college, there's that awareness of students come from a lot of different places, spaces, points in their life, that sort of thing.

That's great, I think, that the fact that you're also not pushing any sort of let's build a relationship or whatever. Your relationship really looks different, it sounds like, for every student, right? And then it's going to be based on what the student wants, and I think that's awesome.

And just has me thinking, gosh, I wish I had Scott as my advisor back in the day.

>> I was just thinking that. I was like, man, I wish I had Scott as an academic advisor. And I think that's a really good point that you bring up with the post-bacc students, because the computer science post-bacc program is the largest at Ecampus.

It's the amount of students that we're serving. It's the people probably listening to this podcast, excited to, thank you so much for listening. Then there's also a ton of people coming from community colleges or other four year institutions, and for a lot of folks making that transition, it feels very isolating to move to a larger institution.

Oregon State University is a large place. There's a lot of buildings on this campus, that's what I'll say. That it can at times feel very impersonal, and very big and at times very corporate. And I think that, hopefully, what folks are getting from this podcast series and this episode is that there's people here who want to connect with you that are real names, real people behind the screen in Corvallis, Oregon that are wanting to support you in whatever way makes the most sense.

And I think that, especially for folks transitioning and whatever their transfer status may or may not be, don't be afraid to reach out to your academic advisor. They are, again, the lifeline, and they're just part of the team here, but more often than not, you're going to meet with your academic advisor over, say, a student success coach.

And so, don't be afraid to invest time in that relationship. It's the only one that you're wanting to pursue here at Oregon State.

>> Another thing as we talk about kind of this relationship building and how it looks different, for those students that maybe are more willing or, I guess, wanting to connect with their advisors maybe a little more frequently outside of kind of the mandatory appointments and stuff, what would you say are the common things that kind of come up?

What are those topics that you frequently see students bring up?

>> Yeah, so we actually do have people come in a lot for academic questions, even sort of outside the required appointments, where three, four years, however long your program is a long time. And so interests change. People want to come in and ask us sort of content related questions of, hey, what have you heard from other students about this class?

Is this an easy class, hard class? What they teach in it? And we can answer those kinds of questions to a limited extent, especially, the advisors who've been here longer have a little bit more information, because they've heard from more students what their experiences are with certain classes.

So, we can offer some advice on that sort of thing in sort of a third party kind of way of, here's what students have told us. I haven't taken this class, I can't verify it, but here's the sense that we're getting. So that's something people ask for help with a lot of the time, just kind of selecting their electives and what they might be interested in.

Then people come in too for just interpersonal stuff. They're like, hey, I'm having some issues communicating with my professor, or I'm not really sure that they're hearing what I'm trying to say. And we can offer some support in that area of like, hey, have you tried this? Maybe try using this discussion forum instead.

Or we can kind of offer alternative avenues to maybe getting your questions answered. It may be some advice on how to sort of conduct yourself in this kind of environment if you're not used to sending professional emails or something like that. And we don't have power to tell faculty what to do, but if there is some sort of really systemic issue that you feel you've experienced this in multiple classes with multiple professors or something like that, there are avenues to kind of escalate those sorts of things.

And so usually we ask that students come and talk to us about those first, and then we can try and offer some more immediate solutions. And if it does appear to be a long-term thing, we do have other sort of contacts that we can offer them say, hey, speak with this person.

Let them know what's going on. If you're the fifth student they've heard from that's having this problem, maybe this is something that we need to address at kind of a larger level. And leadership kind of above me in the department will kind of take it from there, but we can help with those kinds of things as well.

And then some people like to just come in to to check in. People just want to come in every term or every other term and just say, here's how my I'm doing in my classes, and I want to talk to somebody about it. Because maybe their family isn't too interested in what they're studying, unfortunately, or they don't understand what they're studying.

And, again, we're sort of limited. We haven't taken the computer science classes and gone through the program. I mean, some advisors have taken a class here or there, but generally we're only going off of the syllabi and what students and professors have told us. But if we can serve as sort of a sounding board of like, I just want to tell somebody about what I'm doing, I'm interested, I'm excited and here's somebody who will listen.

So we do have students come in for that sort of thing as well, and we're always happy to do that. We don't necessarily prioritize one kind of appointment over another where somebody might need their pin, somebody just wants to chat. If you've got the appointment slot, you have that time as yours for that 30 minutes, however long it might be, and we're just kind of there for whatever it is that you need.

>> Yeah, absolutely. I love that. You've got the time. You've got the space. I think to kind of bring it back to kind of, I hate to say it, businessy kind of things, but just broadly speaking, we've talked a lot about how students are able to interact with academic advisors, appointments, as well as kind of your role in philosophy within the computer science department.

But as someone that works with students before advising, during advising, and after advising, how can students best prepare for those initial advising appointments? What are they able to do on their end before they meet with an advisor, whether it's group registration session or their primary advisor? Yeah, so the largest number of appointments we have are people coming in for their pins because different people have to come in during different terms and things like that.

And during those appointments the biggest thing that would be helpful not just for us but for students is to have some rough idea of kinda where you're going. And if you're totally clueless you have no idea what is you want to do like we're totally willing to kind of help you out and do the planning during the appointment and help figure things out, but if you have some rough idea ahead of time and you can update your MyDegrees planner.

And kind of put it in there a little bit officially. That helps our appointments go a lot smoother if we need to just adjust a thing here or there rather than kind of talk through a whole four years with you if that's what you're wanting to do. Which might actually take multiple appointments, just the extent of that.

So just kind of having an idea of what it is that you want to talk about and then preparing as best you can to kind of have an idea of what you want to do with that. So maybe you already have a question of how can I contact this person, how can I go about this assignment, I want to find tutoring, and if you can do just a little bit of searching ahead of time or come up with a little bit of a plan, you can talk with us about what your idea is and then we can go from there.

And that just makes conversations go a lot smoother than if somebody comes in and they're like, I don't know what I want to do, I don't have any questions, I just don't know where to start, and we can work through that, but it definitely uses a lot more of your appointment time.

Then you might have to come back in again to get the full resolution to whatever it is that you're coming to talk about. That's what we want to avoid is really having people come in for 30 minutes they only get half their questions answered, and then we're booked out another two weeks and you have to wait two weeks to come back in again.

And you can we can always follow up with email but if your questions are really complex, we don't want to have that gap and it's a lot simpler for you and for us to not have to have a back and forth email chain of like 20 different emails.

And just whatever preparation you can do ahead of time, and then we can help you Use that as a foundation and go from there to resolve whatever it is that we're talking about that day.

>> Yeah, absolutely. And just for clarification for our listeners out there, we keep talking about PIN numbers, registration PIN numbers are issued to students every term, as I look at Scott, every term.

And those are unique codes issued to each student, they grant you access to the system to register for classes. So you do need to get those and especially initial students as you're coming in that first term, you have to have a pin number to register for classes.

>> Yeah, and the other thing too, MyDegrees and planner, I think this is, I don't know if this is something that's unique to us, but I think other institutions might have a similar software, but for our listeners, this is a platform or program really that students can utilize to monitor and track degree progress, as well as outline their curriculum, yeah, essentially yeah degree timeline, right?

More or less and I don't know if you have anything to add on the different functions students can do within like kind of the MyDegrees in their planner?

>> Yeah, so that's sort of the primary thing that we go to as advisors to see what students are thinking about as far as their class schedules and kind of their elective choices.

We have a lot of different options in our department for computer science majors, and we really take a look at that and if that's not up to date and it's not updated prior to our appointment, then that's kind of what we're spending our appointment doing a lot of the time for the pin appointments, because the intention of those is, hey, let's get you set up with a solid plan for the next year.

So that if you take your courses exactly as they're listed in your planner, you don't have to think about it. We've already set it up ahead of time you just register for these, we've talked about it, you're good to go. But if we have to have spent a lot of time kind of setting that up during the appointment, spend a lot of time adjusting things talking through those, it just takes away from your time to be able to answer other questions and kind of ask things that you might think are a little bit more important on your end.

But that system is really what we use as our primary resource for what students are planning, what they're thinking, and it's also what we use for things on our end of like degree audits to see whether you've completed all of your requirements to earn your diploma and things like that.

>> So if I'm understanding you, students have the freedom to, before they even meet with their advisor, to kind of look through that and begin sort of tinkering with what classes they want to be taking. And then when they connect with you, you can kind of also help kind of determine, does that make, does this make sense or does there need to be any tweaking, is that correct?

>> Yeah. So, it's split by term. So you can put like winter 2023, I'm going to take these classes, it's going to add up to this many credits, you have options in there too, where if you're not sure what class you want to take, you can put like, I'm going to take this one or this one, and we can talk about that when you get in there, or you can make that decision at that time, whatever works best for your timeline.

Things like that, but yes students have the freedom to go in there, customize it to however they would like as their interests change as their responsibilities change if maybe they need to drop down to half time and figure out how that would work for their plan, you have full access to that.

And it's really helpful, it was helpful for me as a student, I sort of minimize my time meeting with my advisor because I spent a lot of time in MyDegrees, not because I didn't want to talk to them but I was focused on other things.

>> Yeah and I for those listening and air like MyDegrees, what is this thing, if you have access to your my.oregonstate.edu login dashboard it is a tab within that dashboard that you can click through and get access to.

And I think something that I think we've mentioned, all three of us, is that like, MyDegrees is something all students have access to once you have your And you have a declared major. It is like the most centralized place for your roadmap, your degree journey, it is what we all look at when we meet with students and that information is the same for every person looking at your MyDegrees.

So what you see on your MyDegrees page is exactly the same, it's like, what Scott's looking at or what I'm looking at. Like the access is not different, there's no secret information in there, and it is the best place to be looking to get a sense of where you're headed in this degree program.

Your time here at OSU

>> Still secret between you and your advisors not necessarily public,

>> No, that's a great clarifying question.

>> Your professors do not have access to your MyDegrees, they cannot see the rest of your grades or anything like that, we don't share that with them.

Everything in your MyDegrees is protected information, and you can actually request there are notes that you can see that you can actually request your information from the university that we have stored in systems like MyDegrees, so like you have full access to things like that. Anything kind of pertaining to your academic journey, but other people do not.

>> That's a great clarifying statement, thank you everybody for that. Yes, everything is protected under FERPA and it's basically a need-to-know basis is the MyDegrees access.

>> But still, a great tool, something you can rely on as a student and you can view all your print information, and transfer credits to make sure you are kind of seeing how everything's playing out so awesome.

I know we're kind of running up to time, Scott and again I can't thank you enough for being here with us today. One of my final questions, is there any advice you'd like to leave incoming e campus students with?

>> Any way that you can find to communicate with your classmates outside of class, I think is going to be really helpful.

You have your classes in Canvas where you're communicating with people on the discussion boards, and with some classes, you can even go back and look at those things later. Some professors leave them open, some close them pretty quickly, but Yeah, you have access to all those things, but it's not a continuous communication platform.

I mean, it has an inbox and a messaging feature, most people don't use that. So if you can find some way to connect, whether it's Slack or Discord or Reddit or LinkedIn or just any sort of community outside of your classes where you can find the other students and kind of add them on there, maybe create study groups, things like that.

I think it's going to be really helpful for your time here, especially in our department, a lot of that's already been set up by students. So if you are a computer science major, they have a massive Discord that has thousands of people in it. That's totally student-run, I'm in there, there's a couple professors in there.

We answer questions every once in a while, but it's not an official communication space. So we can't answer advising questions in that kind of space in front of everybody else. But we do offer advice if somebody's like, hey, is this class going to be offered? Does anybody know?

And students are in there helping each other out with classes and things like that. And there's just a lot of information to be gained from other students, especially in our program and in those kinds of student-led spaces. And if you can start something like that, just with a small group of people, I think that'd be really helpful for you to kind of maintain those connections, if you're looking to connect to some people outside of just your advisor and to have that continuous connection.

So that maybe you're making some friends and colleagues, future co-workers, things like that throughout the program and not feeling the isolation that some people experience just being online in front of their computer all by themselves.

>> Absolutely, I think that the computer science department has the best community aspect of any department here at Ecampus.

I think that's a fair statement to say.

>> I mean, I think the community oriented aspects of Ecampus programs are prevalent throughout all of them, but I definitely think the CS department is unique in that regard and that's really exciting to hear. But yeah, I think my last question for you as well would be, is there anything that you want to remind or wish that current students knew about academic advising?

>> I suppose I would say a lot of what we've already talked about, in that your advisor is not just there to be like Wikipedia, to just dispense policy information to you and give you your pin and things like that. We really do have a lot of other things that we can offer.

We kind of didn't get to that specific question, but we have a lot of different resources we can point you to, whether it's tutoring or, again, the disability access. We have a basic need center for our on-campus students here. We have some similar support for online students. Just whatever is going on in your life, whether it's academic or not, we have some sort of resource here on campus that we can point you to that can probably help with that.

And so if you need anything or you just want somebody to talk to, that's kind of what we're there for. Again, if you want to come in and just talk about your classes and leave, that's totally up to you. But really think about what it is that you're needing and if you can't find that information, just come talk to us or send us an email, kind of whatever works best for you.

>> Perfect, thank you so much, Scott. This was really exciting.

>> Thanks again, Scott.

>> Yeah, thank you.