

Clem Rinehart Outstanding Advisor Award

Presented to Dave Rogalski, May 2, 2016

As an advising community, we work with thousands of students each academic year and make a positive impact across the college. But what I want to highlight today is not students in the form of numbers; quite the opposite – I want to highlight our work with students as individuals.

The value we bring as advisors is that we make individual connections with our students and those individual connections make this place seem a little smaller, a little more supportive. And I want to tell you about a donor who has chosen to give money to the Academic Advising Center in order to honor and encourage this very connection; his name is Clem Rinehart and he graduated from CU in the early 2000's.

He has donated money so that I would give an annual gift to a current advisor who is doing outstanding work. This isn't the fairy tale story that you might expect, however – the student who experienced such a wonderful advising relationship that he grew up to make millions and opted to give money in his advisor's name for helping him to become who he is today. What makes this unique is that Clem *did not* have a good advising experience while he was here and the money he gives is not extravagant. But he looks back on his experience in college and can see how valuable a meaningful advising and mentoring experience would have been and so he wants to honor an advisor each year who epitomizes the ideal that he wishes for every student.

This is timely for us because what Clem envisions is a holistic approach that goes beyond the bounds of degree requirements and that results in a real mentoring relationship; a very individualized approach to supporting our students. We call this today 'going above and beyond' and there's one advisor in our midst who very clearly embodies the advisor we should all strive to be.

This advisor receives the most positive and consistent ratings on going above and beyond in our survey; but beyond that, students who work with him go out of their way to share their positive experiences – he touches their lives so deeply that they can't help but share their stories. The advisor I'm talking about is Dave Rogalski. And I'm going to share Dave's students' own words to paint a picture of his advising excellence:

- "Mr. Rogalski immediately made me feel both welcome and like I was a priority to him. From his open body language to his consistent eye contact, I immediately knew Mr. Rogalski viewed his role in the lives of undergraduate students as a major responsibility."
- "He was one of the first faculty or staff members I met at this University that made me simultaneously feel like I was being taken seriously and like I could be honest to the point of vulnerability."
- "He gives students honest and essential advice every time a foot is stepped into his office."
- "He invested the time to plan out a multi-year custom schedule for me, which helped me understand how my next couple of years would unfold. This massive effort for a first time meeting resonated with me, and through it, Mr. Rogalski skillfully established a trusting relationship between us instantly. I walked away knowing he was now a resource I would feel comfortable asking questions to, and in the years

since, I have posed scores of questions (on a wide range of topics) to Mr. Rogalski.”

- “I wouldn’t be where I am in my studies today without Dave. At such a big school, it is hard to find people who stick around and actually care about you the way Dave cares.”
- “What his methods have created is a micro-community of current and former students that were positively impacted by Mr. Rogalski’s mentorship. Mr. Rogalski then utilizes that community to further benefit his current students in a way that far exceeded my personal expectations and should be hailed as the standard for academic advisors.”
- “Moments that I shared with Dave were incredibly beneficial and uplifting. He pushed me to think outside the box in not just school but also in life.”
- “He always looks out for my best interest, and he is the one person on campus that I know I can always seek out for sound advice and support. He cares immensely about me both as a student and a person. He takes the time to truly understand each individual situation, and doesn’t make assumptions about what is best for me. I wouldn’t have made it to this point in my academic career if it weren’t for him.” - and one final comment...
- “Thank you, Dave for always being there for me and for so many other students. You mean a lot to us all.”

Now Dave will insist that what he’s doing is nothing more than being an advisor...but there is a level of excellence here that really embodies the *best* of what being an advisor is and that is exactly what this award is about. What you are doing with students, Dave, is special. I am proud to be a part of the advising community with you in it, and I couldn’t be happier to name you as the inaugural recipient of the Rinehart Outstanding Advisor Award, which comes with a cash gift of \$1000.

Please join me in thanking Dave for his most excellent contribution.