

Carthage College Guidelines for Recording Appointment Summaries and Notes in Navigate

Navigate is a web-based tool from the Education Advisory Board (EAB) that facilitates a campus-wide coordinated student support network by allowing student success advisors, career specialists, faculty advisors and other professionals to share Appointment Summaries and Notes that document interactions with students and other relevant information. The benefits of a single, accessible repository for Appointment Summaries and Notes include improved communication, coordination, efficiency, transparency, and a more personalized student experience in advising. The Navigate platform supports and powers the holistic advising model of Carthage College.

Things to keep in mind before you document an interaction with a student:

- FERPA *does allow* for an appropriate level of sharing of student information between different campus offices for legitimate educational purposes. We have configured Navigate with this in mind and put in place guardrails which allow us to share information but also keep within the FERPA guidelines.
- If the information you intend to share in Navigate would be covered under HIPAA, then *do not enter it into the notes*. Navigate is *not* HIPAA compliant and therefore, this level of sensitive information should be shared and stored in other systems.
- When in doubt consider this: would you be willing to say/share this information with the student in person?
- Think of notes as a report, not an evaluation. Describe what happened rather than your interpretation of what occurred. You have the option of sharing the note with the student.
- Assume students, parents, or the general public will read anything and everything you have written. The notes in Navigate become part of the student's record and can be shared with them at any point in time.
- When writing your advising reports and notes, ask yourself the following questions:
 1. Is this something the student would want other people to know?
 2. Is this something another advisor would need to know to perform their job? Why?
 3. Is this something that is within my scope of practice to say? Do I have the necessary training, and is this something germane to my area of professional expertise?
 4. Are the details in my notes based on fact or do they merely represent my own observations, perspectives, guesses, predictions, diagnoses, etc.?

Always keep in mind: The **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** entitles students to access any reports or notes considered part of their academic record. Any Appointment Summaries or Notes created in the Navigate platform are considered part of a student's academic record and are accessible by students, open records requests, and court subpoenas. This applies to Notes whether they are designated as shared with students in the platform or not.

What's the difference between an Appointment Summary and a Note?

- **Appointment Summary** documents important information about advising appointments, such as dates, times, reasons for the meeting and locations. An Appointment Summary should always be tied to a specific encounter between you and a student or group of students.
- **Notes** describe information about the student that you gained outside of an appointment. They are often more transactional in nature (e.g. Center for Student Success, select "Follow Up on

Appointment”, and then document further information or subsequent updates on the student, whether or not they completed steps recommended (e.g. visit with Career Specialist). You can select to make the note accessible/visible to students. *However, even if a Note is not visible to a student, it is still part of the student’s official educational record and therefore included within any student requests for their records.*

*When do you create an **Appointment Summary** when meeting with a student?*

- To document and keep track of the advice given during meetings with the student (in person or phone)
- A best practice is to complete a summary as soon as feasible and as close to the appointment as possible
- Help faculty advisors, career specialists, student success advisors and other student support staff to communicate and provide consistent, informed service
- Create an institutional memory of contacts and recommended actions
- Record valuable data on student use of support services and associated outcomes in order to evaluate the effectiveness of our support

The content of Appointment Summaries aims to communicate:

- For what was the student seeking help?
- What steps were taken to address the student’s concerns?
- What advice and recommendations were made?
- What are agreed upon follow-up actions? Were specific referrals made?
- Overall, summarize what you discussed as it relates to the student’s success.

*Why should you create a **Note**?*

- Record important information that you learned outside of an appointment (e.g. changes in registration, financial aid, etc.)
- Record the outcomes of your efforts to resolve issues for the student.

Finally: When in doubt, leave it out

- ✓ Appointment Summaries and notes should be academic-related and carefully handle personal, potentially sensitive content.
- ✓ Personal and/or sensitive content, whether reported by the student or another person, may include:
 - Medical / mental health concerns
 - Legal problems
 - Relationship problems
 - Family concerns
 - Conflicts with specific instructors
 - Information about academic integrity or student conduct proceedings

Do:	Don't:
<p>Briefly summarize what was discussed as it relates to student success for future reference by the student, other support staff, and future advisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations: "Recommended student take MTH 1040 to create a more solid mathematic foundation." • Advice: "Cautioned against taking 18 credits this term given work schedule." • Referrals: "Referred to The Aspire Center." • Action Plans: "Student plans to follow up with tutoring and schedule an appointment with me after mid-terms." 	<p>Summarize everything that was discussed. Notes are intended to be a brief record of advising contacts highlighting recommendations, referrals, and follow-up plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include unnecessary details: "She said she has been having a good week and is especially excited about moving into a different apartment." • Include personal/sensitive information: "Student disclosed that she has been visiting the Counseling Center." • Include subjective opinions.
<p>Summarize specific course recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Encouraged student to take EXS 0020 to complete exercise and sport science requirement." • "Recommended student take BIO 1020 fall 2022." 	<p>Report problems with specific instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Student doesn't like his MTH 2120 instructor." • "Student said COR 1110 professor has unfair grading policies."
<p>Spell things out for a general audience</p>	<p>Use acronyms students and other campus support staff may not understand</p>
<p>Write fact-based academic-related notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Student is concerned about grades in two courses." • "Student is considering whether his current major is a good fit. Helped him consider other options." • "Student needs to successfully complete PYC 1500 before taking any upper level PYC courses." 	<p>Include speculation, subjective opinions, or judgments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I don't think she is very motivated this semester." • "His personality isn't a good fit for STEM fields. I think he'd feel more at home doing something artistic or creative." • "She has probably been avoiding CHM 2080 because she struggled with CHM 2070."
<p>Use general or coded language concerning sensitive material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Student reported extenuating circumstances related to his academic progress this semester." • "She discussed a difficult situation and requested help from residence life and additional campus resources." • "Student disclosed a personal situation that's having an impact on how things are going this semester." 	<p>Include sensitive information, personal concerns, private matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Student's parents are going through a divorce." • "She reported she was assaulted by her boyfriend earlier this year." • "Student was recently diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder."
<p>Record referrals made and resources shared</p>	<p>Report details surrounding sensitive referrals</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Shared information about the Health and Counseling Center (HCC)" • "Referred to Student Financial Services." • "Referred to Hedberg Writing Center." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "He said he can't concentrate because of relationship problems with his girlfriend. I referred him to the Health and Counseling Center." • "He said he's been having a lot of headaches lately. I'm concerned something more serious may be going on. I suggested he go to Health & Counseling Center to get it checked out." • "Little financial support from family. First Generation student with significant debt building up."
<p>Include notes about positive student behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Student came prepared for session with course plan filled out." • "He has spent time talking with two Sociology professors to learn more about potentially changing to that major." 	<p>Include negative judgements student behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "She seems like she just blows off advising appointments. I can't get her to be serious and plan ahead." • "He seems pretty uninformed about the real world after college and hasn't followed through with plans to get information from his Sociology professor. I think he needs to be more realistic."

Adapted from Keuka College "Recording Notes Guide and Adopting a Campus-Wide Student Notes System," and from RU-N4Success program at Rutgers University – Newark, shared courtesy of [EAB](#).