Career Interview with a College Nursing Advisor

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Introduction

Career interviews help students understand how professional roles are actually developed rather than imagined from a job title. For this assignment, I interviewed Kelly A. Freeman, a student advisor at Seton Hall University's College of Nursing. She had served as my advisor since 2016 and observed my academic development for more than two years. The original interview shows that her career was not planned in a straight line: she studied economics, became a peer advisor, returned to graduate school, mentored first-year students, and eventually moved into nursing academic advising. Her experience demonstrates that career direction can emerge through dissatisfaction, experimentation, education, and relationships. This expanded report preserves the question-and-answer format while adding context about academic advising, nursing-student needs, transferable skills, organizational culture, continuing education, and the specific lessons I can apply to my own academic and professional development (National Academic Advising Association, 2017).

Interview Setting and Purpose

The interview focused on how Mrs. Freeman entered advising, what she values in the role, what challenges her, how she experiences the College of Nursing environment, and why she has remained at Seton Hall. I selected her because our existing advisor-student relationship allowed me to compare her answers with the support I had personally received. The purpose was not to produce a complete biography or generalize from one person to every advisor. It was to study one career path closely and identify practical lessons concerning vocational fit, communication, persistence, and lifelong education (Seton Hall University, 2026).

What a College Nursing Advisor Does

A nursing advisor helps students interpret academic requirements, plan course sequences, understand prerequisites, respond to setbacks, and connect with institutional resources. Nursing programs can be especially demanding because classroom courses, laboratories, clinical placements, progression rules, licensure preparation, and professional conduct are interdependent. An advising

error or delayed course can affect an entire sequence. The advisor does not replace faculty, counselors, financial-aid professionals, or personal responsibility. Instead, the role coordinates information and helps students make informed choices before a problem becomes irreversible (Crookston, 1994; Gordon et al., 2008).

The Interview

When did you first realize counseling or advising was what you wanted to do?

Mrs. Freeman explained that the path was partly accidental. As an undergraduate, she studied economics and felt unhappy with the direction. She became a peer advisor, returned for graduate study, and worked as a mentor in freshman studies. After graduate school, she eventually became a college nursing advisor. Her answer challenges the assumption that successful professionals always know their final occupation from childhood. A role can be discovered through a task that reveals an unexpected strength. Peer advising allowed her to experience the satisfaction of helping students before she possessed the final job title.

What do you enjoy most about the work?

She enjoys the college environment and especially values seeing a student who struggled return, improve, and succeed in the chosen field. This answer identifies development rather than routine administration as the emotional center of advising. Course registration and policy interpretation matter because they contribute to a longer transformation. An advisor may meet a student during academic difficulty, uncertainty, or disappointment and later see that person complete a program. The reward is not taking credit for the student's work but knowing that timely guidance helped the student remain able to do it.

What do you enjoy least?

Mrs. Freeman finds it frustrating when she provides information that could help a student succeed, but the student does not follow the advice and later experiences academic harm. This frustration is understandable because advisors can often recognize predictable consequences. Nevertheless, advising has limits. Adults retain the right and responsibility to make choices, and they may face circumstances the advisor cannot see. Effective advising therefore requires clear explanation, documentation, follow-up, and respect for autonomy. The advisor can increase the quality of a decision but cannot live the student's life or guarantee compliance.

How would you describe the work environment and organizational culture?

She described the environment as fast-paced and found it interesting to work around nursing faculty members and administrators. This exposes her to nursing culture, professional requirements, and the pressures of a rigorous program. The environment likely changes across the academic calendar: registration, progression reviews, clinical preparation, graduation, and new-student orientation create different periods of intensity. Advising in a professional school also requires communication across academic and administrative boundaries. The advisor must understand policy while recognizing that students experience the policy personally.

How long have you worked at the university, and what has made you stay?

Mrs. Freeman had worked there since August 2016 and said that she enjoyed the job. She also valued educational benefits, including support for doctoral tuition, and noted a close family connection because her sister was an undergraduate. Her answer shows that retention is shaped by both meaningful work and institutional conditions. Enjoyment alone may not sustain a career if development is impossible. Tuition support allows an employee to continue learning, which benefits both the individual and the institution. Family and community connection can also make a workplace more personally significant.

Lesson One: Careers Can Be Discovered Through Experience

The first major lesson is that career paths are not always linear. Mrs. Freeman's dissatisfaction with economics did not mean that her education was wasted. It helped her recognize a poor fit and move toward work that used different strengths. Peer advising and freshman mentoring provided low-risk opportunities to test an alternative. Students often believe changing direction proves failure, but deliberate adjustment can be evidence of learning. The more important question is whether the person reflects on experience and takes the next informed step.

Lesson Two: Advice Has Value When It Becomes Action

I learned that receiving advice and using advice are separate activities. Students may attend appointments and agree with recommendations without changing study habits, schedules, or

decisions. Good advising requires the student to ask questions, confirm understanding, and translate guidance into a plan. I should leave an appointment knowing what action is required, when it must be completed, and what consequence follows if it is delayed. When I disagree, I should explain my concern rather than simply ignore the recommendation. This creates a more honest partnership.

Lesson Three: Advisors Offer Perspective, Not Infallibility

The original reflection suggested that successful people follow counselors and that failure to follow advice leads to failure. That statement is too absolute. Advisors have experience and access to institutional information, but they can misunderstand, make errors, or recommend one of several reasonable paths. Students remain responsible for verifying important requirements and making personal decisions. The mature lesson is to take advice seriously without surrendering judgment. I should compare the recommendation with official policy, my goals, and relevant evidence, then communicate before acting.

Lesson Four: Continuing Education Is Part of Professional Identity

Mrs. Freeman’s doctoral study demonstrates that education does not end when a person becomes employed. Advanced study can deepen expertise, open leadership opportunities, and renew intellectual motivation. It also requires time management because work, study, and personal responsibilities compete. Her example encourages me to view graduation not as the end of learning but as entry into a profession that changes. In nursing, continuing education is particularly important because evidence, technology, standards, and patient needs evolve.

Lesson Five: Interest and Ability Must Be Developed Together

It is important to choose work that has personal meaning, but interest alone is not enough. A person may be drawn to nursing or advising and still need academic preparation, communication skill, resilience, and ethical judgment. Mrs. Freeman’s transition included graduate education and practical mentoring experience. Her story therefore supports exploration combined with competence. I should test my interest through coursework, clinical exposure, volunteering, informational interviews, and reflection rather than making a career decision based only on an idealized image.

Lesson Six: Helping Professions Require Boundaries

Advisors and nurses both work with people who may be distressed, resistant, or overwhelmed. A helper can provide information, empathy, and structure but cannot control another person's choices. Without boundaries, frustration can turn into blame or emotional exhaustion. Mrs. Freeman's least-favorite aspect of advising reveals this tension. The professional must remain available and consistent while accepting that the outcome belongs partly to the student. This lesson will transfer to nursing, where patients may decline recommendations or face barriers that prevent adherence.

The Relationship Between Advising and Nursing

Academic advising and nursing share several skills. Both require listening, assessment, education, documentation, confidentiality, and referral. An advisor identifies the student's academic position and available options; a nurse assesses a patient and helps coordinate care. Neither role should assume that giving instructions ensures understanding. Both benefit from teach-back, plain language, and respect for individual circumstances. The comparison helps me appreciate advising as a professional practice rather than a scheduling service.

Communication Skills Observed

Mrs. Freeman has been helpful and empathetic in her interactions with students. Empathy in advising means recognizing that an academic rule can affect identity, finances, family expectations, and future plans. It does not mean changing every rule or promising an outcome. Effective communication combines warmth with accuracy. I have learned that difficult information is more useful when it is delivered directly, with a clear explanation of alternatives and next steps. This is also a model for future patient communication.

The Fast-Paced College Environment

A fast-paced culture can create energy and learning, but it can also lead to rushed decisions, delayed responses, and burnout. Advisors need systems for appointment preparation, recordkeeping, triage, and follow-up. Students can support the process by arriving prepared with questions and documents. Institutions should maintain manageable caseloads and provide training. The interview made me aware that individual helpfulness is supported or constrained by organizational design. A dedicated advisor cannot compensate indefinitely for poor systems.

Tuition Benefits and Employee Development

Educational benefits were one reason Mrs. Freeman remained at the university. This illustrates how employers retain people by investing in growth. Tuition support can build skills and loyalty, though access should be clear and equitable. For the employee, the benefit also creates responsibility to plan study realistically and connect it with professional goals. When evaluating future workplaces, I should look beyond salary to mentoring, education, workload, benefits, and opportunities to advance.

Challenges Students Bring to Advising

Nursing students may struggle with science courses, time management, test anxiety, finances, family responsibilities, clinical stress, or uncertainty about career fit. One recommendation will not solve every problem. Advisors need to identify which issue belongs within academic planning and which requires referral to tutoring, counseling, disability support, financial aid, or faculty. Students also differ in culture and previous educational experience. A responsive advisor asks rather than assumes why a student is struggling.

My Development as a Nursing Student

Because Mrs. Freeman had known me for more than two years, the interview also encouraged me to examine my progress. Advising had helped me understand requirements and make decisions, but I remain responsible for preparation and follow-through. I have learned to seek help earlier instead of waiting for difficulty to become severe. I also understand that becoming a nurse requires more than passing courses. It requires reliability, communication, reflection, and willingness to accept feedback. My relationship with my advisor has provided a setting in which those habits can develop.

My Career Action Plan

First, I will use advising appointments deliberately by preparing questions, reviewing my academic record, and recording agreed actions. Second, I will confirm program requirements through official sources and ask for clarification when information conflicts. Third, I will continue exploring nursing roles through clinical experiences and professional conversations. Fourth, I will treat setbacks as information requiring adjustment rather than proof that I cannot succeed. Finally, I will plan for continuing education after initial qualification, recognizing that professional competence must be renewed throughout a career.

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Questions for a Future Interview

If I conducted a follow-up interview, I would ask how Mrs. Freeman measures advising success, how doctoral study has changed her practice, which student needs are most difficult for the institution to meet, and what training new advisors receive. I would also ask how she manages emotional frustration and how advising changed during periods of remote learning or crisis. These questions would extend the interview from career biography into professional practice and organizational improvement.

Conclusion

My interview with Kelly A. Freeman showed that a meaningful career can emerge through exploration rather than a perfect initial plan. Her path from an unhappy economics major to peer advising, graduate study, freshman mentoring, and nursing academic advising demonstrates adaptability and continued learning. She values the college environment and the success of students who recover from struggle, while finding it difficult when advice that could prevent harm is ignored. The most important lesson is not that students must obey advisors without question. It is that effective advising requires a partnership: the advisor provides experience, policy knowledge, empathy, and perspective, while the student asks, evaluates, decides, and acts. Her example has strengthened my commitment to use guidance responsibly, remain open to growth, and approach nursing as a career of lifelong learning.

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