



## The Handbook of International Student Advising

By Nancy E. Young and Gary Althen

2013, *Intercultural Interaction, LLC*, 297 pages

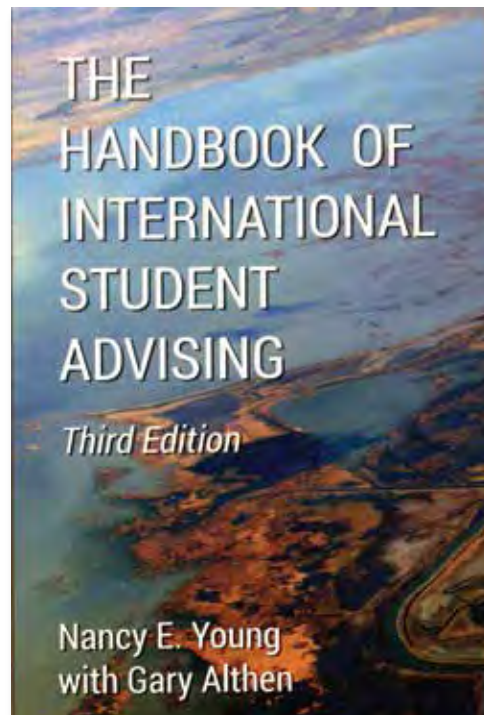
Reviewed by Robin Catmur

As international student advisers, we are constantly looking for the “right” answers to our students’ questions and needs. We look for answers supported by statute and regulation, and also by the adviser’s “bible”—the *NAFSA Adviser’s Manual*. Often, however, we are faced with unclear government guidance, murky regulations, and inconsistent practices. In almost 20 years of working in the field of academic immigration advising, I have not found a better resource to manage the increasingly complex areas in which we work, than the new edition of *The Handbook of International Student Advising*. This 2013 edition, revised by Nancy Young, provides the new and inexperienced adviser, as well as the seasoned veteran, with invaluable and contextual guidance.

With the restructuring of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 2003, the creation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, and the increased reporting and data management demands placed on designated school officials (DSOs) and alternate responsible officers (AROs), black and white, siloed advising is no longer effective or humane. I have seen this constantly in my service as a regulatory ombudsman for NAFSA for many years,

having been routinely asked by colleagues for answers to questions that have no right or wrong response, even though they are regulatory in nature. Good examples can be seen if we look at the discussion threads common on NAFSA’s International Student and Scholar discussion forums, where we see such a broad range of viewpoints and practices—often directly opposed to each other. Navigating to the “right answer” and the “compliant” practice seems almost impossible at times. For any adviser seeking to broaden his or her comprehension of this confusing continuum of regulatory and advising interpretations, the third edition of this book is a critical tool.

From a deep exploration of the internationalization setting in which we and our international students and scholars find ourselves, and all the related implications for our institutions, to an examination of nature and roles held by advisers, *The Handbook of International Student Advising* is both comprehensive in scope and detailed in nuance. Discussions of the required knowledge, skills and practices in which advisers must hold competencies give an unequalled perspective for advisers of all skill level. Explor-



ing professional development opportunities and related roles in expanding and confirming knowledge, authors Young and Althen have given us the keys to success in our responsibilities.

This book emphasizes not just the nuts and bolts knowledge required, but the essential attributes of a well-qualified adviser. The authors note that “...it is not enough that international student advisers are intelligent, but they need to be able to use their knowledge and experience in particular ways—which I have labeled the four C’s of thinking: critical, constructive, compassionate, and creative” (p. 104). Back in the day we were happy to simply issue correctly completed, carbon copied I-20 forms and lovely multi-colored IAP-66 forms. Our worst fear was that the old HP roller feed printer would jam. Now

we are more concerned with issues such as naming convention conflicts between Consular and Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP); batch failures to Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS); how to issue I-20 forms for new and creative nontraditional academic programs; processing leave of absence—five-month returning “work arounds”; and Optional Practical Training (OPT) cap-gap adjudication errors with incredibly long data fix timeframes. The continuum in which we work, and in which our international students and scholars live and study today,

demands a far more advanced and flexible skill set.

Any academic immigration practitioner who wishes to continue to excel and expand in the international advising role and to better serve the international populations coming to the United States would benefit from a close reading of this excellent third edition. In an ever-changing regulatory and intercultural environment, it is packed with gems of wise counsel that will make me more effective, and better able to do my job. It will most certainly help you as well to advise and serve your international

populations in a more compliant and compassionate manner. At the same time, you will find hands on ways to advance critical job-related skills, all of which are vital to the work that we do in our chosen career paths.

My advice is this: don't just read this book. Sleep with it under your pillow. Used in conjunction with *NAFSA's Adviser's Manual 2.0*, it will help you more than any other workshop, training session, or webinar that you have taken in the past. **IE**

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