A Broad Prospective on Students’ Experiences with Academic Advising: Sharing Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement

Study Overview: This poster provides an overview of recent results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In the spring of 2013, 224 four-year colleges and universities opted to add a set of items about academic advising to the NSSE survey. Over 57,000 first-year students and 83,000 seniors provided responses.

Purpose: Results are intended to offer a broad perspective on students’ academic advising experiences. Findings may prompt general discussions among the academic advising community about potential areas for future research and improvements. Encouraging contributions are also highlighted.

Sample Statistics
- Students=140,662
- 86% full-time
- 63% women
- Class level: 41% first-years, 59% seniors
- Race/ethnicity: 3% Asian, 9% Black, 9% Latino, 67% White
- Institutions=224
- Carnegie: 40% Research, 46% Master’s
- Control: 12% Bac., 2% Other
- 66% public, 34% private

Primary Source of Advice
- During the current school year, to what extent have your academic advisors done the following? (Very little, Some, Moderate, Substantial)
  - Discussed your career interests and post-graduation plans
  - Helped you get information on special opportunities (study abroad, internships, research projects, etc.)
  - Helped you understand academic support options
  - Provided useful information about courses
  - Helped you when you had academic difficulties
  - Bereavable when needed
  - Informed you of important deadlines
  - Provided useful information about courses
  - Helped you understand academic rules and policies
  - Helped you get information on special opportunities
  - Discussed your career interests and post-graduation plans

Summary Results by Class Level and First-generation Status
- Table 3. Significant Mean Differences and Effect Sizes *

Notable Findings
- Overall, both class levels reported favorable and similar experiences with academic advisors.
  - Over one-third of students said their primary source of advice came from an assigned academic advisor.
  - 7 out of 10 first-year and senior students said academic advisors were responsive and closely listened to their concerns and questions.
  - About two-thirds of students were substantially informed of useful course information, deadlines, and academic rules and policies.

The analyses also revealed some concerns.
- About 20% of first-year and 22% of senior respondents thought information on special programs such as study abroad, exchange programs, and research projects was ‘not applicable’ to their interactions with academic advisors.
- Many students did not seek the help of academic advisors when they experienced academic difficulties. Over one-third of students said they received ‘very little’ or ‘some’ help.
- One-quarter of seniors reported they had ‘very little’ discussions with an advisor about career and post-graduate plans.

Positive feedback from first-gen students.
- In general, first-generation students reported slightly higher means than non-first-generation students.

Concluding Thoughts: Results revealed improvements to consider, however, the academic advising community should be pleased with the feedback from students. As a whole, advisors are adequately supporting needs of students especially those who may require it the most, first-generation students.

Sample of poster: 2013 Annual Conference, Salt Lake City, UT

Copy of poster found at: nsse.iub.edu/html/pubs.cfm

Method: Data were disaggregated by class level and parental education. Item-level frequencies, t-test results, and effect sizes are presented to estimate meaningful differences among groups.