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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.

Table 1. Academic Advising Item Set

During the current school year, to what extent have your academic advisors done the following? (Very little, Some, Quite a bit, Very much, N/A)

- Been available when needed
- Listened closely to your concerns and questions
- Informed you of important deadlines
- Helped you understand academic rules and policies
- Informed you of academic support options (tutoring, study groups, help with writing, etc.)
- Provided useful information about courses
- Helped you when you had academic difficulties
- Helped you get information on special opportunities (study abroad, internships, research projects, etc.)
- Discussed your career interests and post-graduation plans

During the current school year, which of the following has been your primary source of advice regarding your academic plans? (Select one)

- Academic advisor(s) assigned to you
- Academic advisor(s) available to any student
- Faculty or staff not formally assigned as an advisor
- Online advising system (degree progress report, etc.)
- Web site, catalog, or other published resources
- Friends or other students
- Family members
- Other
- I did not seek academic advise this year

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.

Sample Statistics

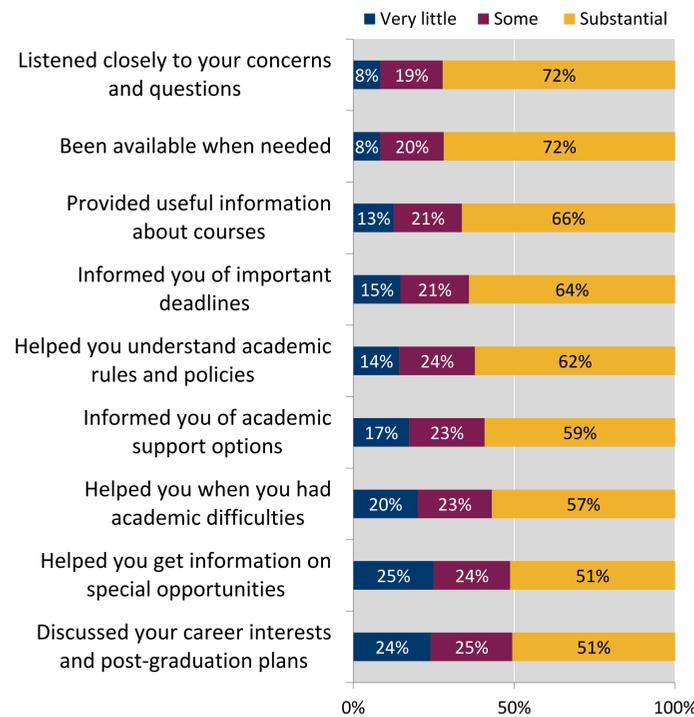
Students=140,662 **Institutions=224**
86% full-time Carnegie
63% women • 40% Research
Class level • 46% Master's
• 41% first-years • 12% Bac.
• 59% seniors • 2% Other
Race/ethnicity Control
• 3% Asian • 66% public
• 9% Black • 34% private
• 9% Latino
• 67% White

Primary Source of Advice

Table 2. Frequency by Class	FY	SR
Assigned advisor	35%	34%
Advisor available to any student	9%	9%
Faculty or staff not formally assigned as an advisor	10%	19%
Online advising system	2%	5%
Website, catalog, or other source	4%	5%
Friends or other students	15%	10%
Family members	18%	8%
Other	3%	4%
Did not seek advice	5%	6%

Summary Results by Class Level

Figure 1. Item Frequencies for First-year Students ^{a, b}



^a Due to space only FY results are reported. Trends were similar among seniors.
^b 'Substantial' represents the combined responses of 'very much' and 'quite a bit'.

Summary Results by Class Level and First-generation Status

Table 3. Significant Mean Differences and Effect Sizes ^a

	First-years		Seniors	
	Sig. Level	ES	Sig. Level	ES
Listened closely to your concerns and questions				
Been available when needed				
Provided useful information about courses	***	.04	***	.06
Informed you of important deadlines	***	.05	***	.06
Helped you understand academic rules and policies	***	.09	***	.10
Informed you of academic support options	***	.05	***	.05
Helped you when you had academic difficulties	***	.07	***	.06
Helped you get information on special opportunities	**	.04		
Discussed your career interests and post-graduation plans	***	.04	***	-.06

^a Mean differences that are larger than would be expected by change are noted with asterisks referring to the three significance levels (*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001). Cohen's d represents the effect size (ES). An effect size of .2 is consider small, .5 moderate, and .8 large. Positive effect sizes suggest first-generation students reported higher means than non-first-generation students.

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.

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