Promoting Student Success through Academic Advising

Pu-Shih Daniel Chen
Chad R. Christensen
Indiana University Bloomington

ACPA Atlanta 2008 Annual Convention
Overview

- Purpose of the study
- What is NSSE?
- What did the students say?
- What have we learned from the literature?
- NSSE academic advising items
- NSSE academic advising scales and results
- Implications
- Questions & Discussion
Purpose of the Study

- How to measure the quality of academic advising?
- How did academic advising affect student engagement, retention, and other desirable college outcomes?
What is NSSE?

- National Survey of Student Engagement

- Piloted in 1999; inaugural year 2000

- This year close to 800 institutions and 1.5 million students surveyed
What is NSSE?

- Evaluates the extent to which first-year and senior students engage in effective educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development
- Sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
Survey Administration

- Administered to a random sample of first-year & senior students
- Paper & Web-based survey
- Flexible to accommodate consortium questions
- Multiple follow-ups to increase response rates
NSSE’s Survey Instrument

- Student Behaviors
- Institutional Actions & Requirements
- Reactions to College
- Student Background Information

Student Learning & Development
What does NSSE report?

Benchmark comparisons

- Active and Collaborative Learning
- Level of Academic Challenge
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Supportive Campus Environment
Effective Educational Practices

- Student-faculty contact
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- Time on task
- High expectations
- Cooperation among students
- Respect for diverse talents and ways of learning

Two Components of Student Engagement

- What *students* do: Time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What *institutions* do: Using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things
Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of college impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement.

Lessons from the Research

- What matters most is what students do, not who they are
- A key factor is the quality of effort students expend
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities

NSSE Results

- A window into the undergraduate experience
- Discover strengths and weaknesses in educational program
- Identify areas that need attention to improve student learning and success
- Help pinpoint aspects not in line with mission, or what institution expects
How NSSE is Used

- Institutions
- Accreditation
- USA Today
“The primary purpose of academic advising is to assist student in the development of meaningful educational plans”

Council for Academic Standards for Higher Education
I am a single parent, work full time day shifts with the county Sheriff's Office as a Deputy Sheriff and attend this university three nights a week (9cr) a semester. The advisors work strongly with my needs and inability of my not so flexible school schedule. I truly admire and find this university a valuable and much needed part of this community.
What did the students say?

- I have been at NSSEville State University for two years now and never was told who my advisor was. The teachers who did advise me didn't know what they were talking about and gave me bad advice. Now I am at my last semester trying to graduate, and I have a class that did not count for what I was told it would.
What did the students say?

- I have had, for the most part, a terrific experience at NSSEville State University. I feel that my professors (within the English and Education department) are very helpful and friendly, and my advisors vital to my success.
What did the students say?

- My advisor did not help at all. I had to do everything on my own. Whenever I asked questions, my advisor made me feel like I was either stupid or wasting his time.
What did the students say?

- Better than my academic advisor was my faculty advisor. I knew her personally and she was clearly interested and invested in my success in the program and in the future.
In all honesty, I have not had the best past couple of years at NSSEville State University. I have not had an advisor since my freshman year and when asking for another one, was not assigned one. I feel that some of the staff is not always fair in how they grade and pick favorites a lot of the time.
Group discussion

1. How is academic advising accomplished on your campus?
2. What do you think students would say about the academic advising on your campus?
3. What are the components of successful academic advising?
4. How do you assess the quality of academic advising?
Why is Academic Advising Important?
Literature Review

- National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)
  - “Academic advising is integral to fulfilling the teaching and learning mission of higher education. Through academic advising, students learn to become members of their higher education community, to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students, and to prepare to be educated as citizens of a democratic society and a global community.”
Literature Review

- Pascarella and Terenzini (2005)
  - “Research indicates that academic advising can play a role in students’ decisions to persist in their chances of graduating”

- Metzer (1989)
  - High-quality academic advising has been attributed to improved student retention
Literature Review

  - Adopt a talent development approach to advising
  - Help students map out a path to success
  - Connect students to co-curricular learning opportunities
  - Encourage students to seek out and learn from experiences with different forms of diversity
Literature Review

- Kuh (2006)
  - Advisors know their students well.
  - Advisors strive for meaningful interactions with students.
  - Advisors help students identify pathways to academic and social success.
  - Advising and student success is considered a tag team activity.
Data Sources

- 27 U.S. 4-year Colleges and Universities
  - Carnegie Classifications
    - Research universities - 5
    - Master’s - 8
    - Baccalaureate – 12
    - Others - 2
- 9,664 randomly selected students
  - 4,692 First-Year students
  - 4,970 Seniors
NSSE Academic Advising Items

- Original – 16 items
- Initial model – 2 scales & 14 items
NSSE Academic Advising Items

- Final model – 11 items & 3 scales
Quality of Academic Advising

- Informative & Availability (5)
- Career Support (3)
- Educational Support (3)

Intersections indicate areas where multiple supports overlap.
Psychometric Properties

- Confirmatory Factor Analysis
  - GFI = .958
  - RMSEA = .055

- Reliability
  - Informative & Availability - .94
  - Career Support - .95
  - Educational Support - .89
### Meeting with advisor(s)

About how many times have you met with your academic advisor in the current academic year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting with advisor(s) – by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-test p<.001, Cohen’s d = 0.19
Meeting with advisor(s) – by GPA

One-way ANOVA  p = 0.6
Meeting with advisor(s) – by institutional type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
<th>Master's</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Value</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-way ANOVA  p < .001
Quality of academic advising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Seniors only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informative &amp; Availability</td>
<td>▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Support</td>
<td>▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Support</td>
<td>▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Academic Advising</td>
<td>▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- ▲: Never met with advisor
- ▲: Met with advisor once
Academic advising and student engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Bar Graph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive campus environment</td>
<td>More than 2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching educational experiences</td>
<td>Less than one time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-faculty interaction</td>
<td>More than 2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active &amp; collaborative learning</td>
<td>More than 2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of academic challenge</td>
<td>More than 2 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Light blue: More than 2 times
- Dark blue: Less than one time
Academic advising and self-reported gains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>More than 2 times</th>
<th>Less than one time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gains in general education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gains in personal and social development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gains in practical competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- More than 2 times
- Less than one time
# Academic advising and deep learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More than 2 times</th>
<th>Less than one time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher order thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Satisfaction with academic advising

Percentage of students who rate their academic advising experiences as good or excellent

How many times the student met with his/her academic advisor in the current academic year
How many times the student met with his/her academic advisor in the current academic year
What causes students NOT to meet with their academic advisors?

- My advisor provides accurate information about courses
- My advisor provides my school’s academic rules and policies
- My advisor provides me with accurate information about academic requirements
- My advisor talks with me about my career interests and plans
What makes students come back?

- My advisor keeps me informed of support options such as tutoring (.3)
- My advisor shows me where to get information on different educational options (.28)
- My advisor assists me when I have academic difficulties (.28)
- My advisor is interested in my plans for the future (.28)
Implications

- Academic advisors must provide accurate information about courses & academic policies
- At least meet with academic advisor once. Twice is better!
- Academic advisor must provide information on academic supports and educational options
Implications (continues)

- Attitude is important! Students know if you are interested in them or not!
- Good academic advising can promote student engagement and better learning outcomes
Questions & Discussion

Contact Us:
Pu-Shih Daniel Chen, Ph.D. (pdchen@indiana.edu)
Chad R. Christensen (chachris@indiana.edu)

You can download our presentation at:
http://