

# **Student Perceptions of Academic Advisement at Illinois State University**

Derek Herrmann  
Coordinator  
University Assessment Services

# Demographics

- 1,032 students began the survey
- 784 completed the survey

# Demographics

- Major status
  - 91.2% have a major
  - 7.1% don't have a major
  - 1.7% were students at large
- Declared minor
  - 47.9% have
  - 52.1% have not

# Demographics

- Credit hours earned
  - 22.6% had less than 24
  - 20.2% had between 25 and 60
  - 31.4% had between 61 and 90
  - 22.2% had 91 or more
  - 3.7% did not know

# Demographics

- Expected use of advisement services in a typical semester
  - 5.9% said not at all
  - 65.7% said 1 or 2 times
  - 25.0% said between 3 and 5 times
  - 3.4% said 6 or more times

# Demographics

- Student status
  - 66.2% were native students
  - 33.8% were transfer students
- Sex
  - 25.8% were male
  - 74.2% were female

# Demographics

- Age
  - 21.6% were 17 or 18
  - 14.2% were 19
  - 18.8% were 20
  - 20.1% were 21
  - 21.2% were between 22 and 35
  - 1.5% were between 36 and 45
  - 2.6% were 46 or older

# Research Questions

- Do native students ( $n = 516$ ) expect to utilize academic advisement services more in a typical semester than transfer students ( $n = 264$ )? → **NO**



# Research Questions

- Are men ( $n = 202$ ) or women ( $n = 580$ ) more satisfied with their academic advisement? → **NO** *except...*
  - ‘I come prepared to my academic advising appointments’ (**Men:  $M = 3.47$  & Women:  $M = 3.59$** )
  - ‘I think there should be a University policy requiring students to see their assigned academic advisor(s)’ (**Men:  $M = 2.88$  & Women:  $M = 3.11$** )
  - ‘I schedule meetings in advance (not same day or walk in) with my academic advisor(s) at Illinois State University’ (**Men:  $M = 3.28$  & Women:  $M = 3.44$** )

# Research Questions

- Are students in a major ( $n = 715$ ) more satisfied with academic advising than students not in a major ( $n = 69$ )? → **NO except...**
  - ‘I can locate a complete list of all coursework required for graduation in my plan of study’ (**Major:  $M = 3.33$  & No major:  $M = 2.94$** )
  - ‘My academic advisor(s) at Illinois State University are available for a meeting within a reasonable period of time’ (**Major:  $M = 3.19$  & No major:  $M = 3.48$** )
  - ‘My academic advisor(s) at Illinois State University give me sufficient time during our meetings to address my questions’ (**Major:  $M = 3.30$  & No major:  $M = 3.53$** )

# Research Questions

- Is there a difference in academic advising satisfaction between students who attended Transfer Day ( $n = 171$ ) and students who did not attend Transfer Day ( $n = 95$ )? → **NO**
- Is there a relationship between the number of credit hours students have earned and their level of trust in information provided by academic advisors? → **YES (negative/inverse relationship)**

# Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between student-advisor collaboration on a long-term graduation plan and a desire for a University policy requiring students to see their advisor? → **YES (positive relationship)**
- Is there a relationship between being a native student and being admitted directly into a major? → **Could not be answered**

# Research Questions

- Do students with a declared minor ( $n = 374$ ) have greater access to advisor(s) in their minor than students without a declared minor ( $n = 406$ )? → **NO**

# Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between the number of times students expect to use advisement services in a typical semester and their satisfaction with academic advisement? → **YES (positive relationship) except...**
  - ‘I leave my advising sessions with a clear idea of classes for which I should register’
  - ‘I have access to an academic advisor in my minor program’
  - ‘I can locate a list of all coursework required for graduation in my plan of study’
  - ‘I come prepared to my academic advising appointments’
  - ‘My academic advisor(s) at Illinois State University are knowledgeable about my plan of study’
  - ‘My academic advisor(s) at Illinois State University are available for a meeting within a reasonable period of time’

# Content Analyses

- Responses coded using excerpts from the responses
- Codes are in the students' own words
- Codes placed into categories based on similarity

574 responses in 19 categories (2 had subcategories)

**WHAT WORKS WELL?**



# What works well?

- Communication (17 responses; 3.0%)
  - ‘Able to communicate well with my advisor in a nice and stress free environment’
  - ‘Good communication’
  - ‘Being able to communicate with your advisor’
  - ‘BOTH THE ADVISOR AND STUDENT COMMUNICATING BACK AND FORTH’
  - ‘The ability to communicate’

# What works well?

- Knowledge (139 responses; 24.2%)
  - General/specific to the major: 76 responses; 13.2%
  - Courses/graduation requirements: 63 responses; 11.0%

# What works well?

- General/specific to the major
  - ‘Knowledge I walk out of it with’
  - ‘Always has an answer to my questions’
  - ‘Knows the thing that need to be done for my major very well’
  - ‘Know a lot of resources that can help’
  - ‘A lot of knowledge and experience’

# What works well?

- Courses/graduation requirements
  - ‘Helping out when figuring out classes’
  - ‘Knowledge of plan of study’
  - ‘Helping with scheduling and graduation requirements’
  - ‘Helps me plan a schedule that works for my life’
  - ‘Takes a look at what I am missing and tries to fill in the blanks and sometimes taking care of two things with one class’

# What works well?

- Availability (56 responses; 9.8%)
  - In-person: 17 responses; 3.0%
  - Phone and/or e-mail: 39 responses; 6.8%

# What works well?

- In-person
  - ‘Schedules are very flexible’
  - ‘Always there to answer my questions’
  - ‘Readily available within a few days of needing an appointment’
  - ‘Can get an appointment pretty quickly if you really need help’
  - ‘Accessibility’

# What works well?

- Phone and/or e-mail
  - Always answer your e mails'
  - 'Respond to questions by email quickly'
  - Responds with punctuality and genuine care'
  - 'Response time to emails and phone calls'
  - 'Communicated with me via e-mail information pertaining not only to my course of study but deadlines or items that were of interest'

# What works well?

- Walk-ins (8 responses; 1.4%)
  - ‘The availability of walk in appointments’
  - ‘Option for walk-in hours’
  - ‘Walk-in days during the first week of school’
  - ‘Can go whenever I have any questions’
  - ‘Have to schedule appointments and have the option of doing walk-ins as well’



# What works well?

- Scheduling of appointments (39 responses; 6.8%)
  - ‘Appointment process is easy and efficient’
  - ‘Way they sign up for appointments’
  - ‘Make an appointment based upon my needs’
  - ‘Scheduling is easy and convenient’
  - ‘The sign up for appointment procedure’

# What works well?

- Personable and/or friendly (28 responses; 4.9%)
  - ‘Easy to talk to’
  - ‘Very friendly and happy’
  - ‘Very kind and are very good at listening’
  - ‘Openness and the general concern’
  - ‘Very courteous’

# What works well?

- Helpful (36 responses; 6.3%)
  - ‘Assurance of the counselors here helping me’
  - ‘Helping me step by step’
  - ‘Very helpful in many aspects’
  - ‘Want to help you with your success’
  - ‘Willingness to help me’

# What works well?

- Honest and/or right to the point (17 responses; 3.0%)
  - ‘Adviser told me what I had to do upfront’
  - ‘Are completely honest with you’
  - ‘Answer my questions thoughtfully and thoroughly’
  - ‘Don’t sugar coat anything’
  - ‘Truly answers any questions for me’

# What works well?

- Really cares (31 responses; 5.4%)
  - ‘Want you to achieve your goals’
  - ‘Enthusiastic about my success’
  - ‘Dedication to each student really comes across’
  - Having a good relationship with your adviser’
  - ‘Genuine interest in my success’

# What works well?

- Organized and/or prepared (25 responses; 4.4%)
  - ‘Seems to remember me and my goals whenever we meet’
  - ‘Reviewing a students record before they come in for a scheduled appointment’
  - Well organized’
  - ‘Remember to include the notes from our previous session’
  - ‘Followed through promptly with any paperwork’

# What works well?

- Everything (7 responses; 1.2%)

# What works well?

- Friendly and/or comfortable location (8 responses; 1.4%)
  - ‘Office space is pleasant’
  - ‘Atmosphere. I always feel comfortable’
  - ‘Positive quotes around the waiting room’
  - ‘Create a comfortable environment’
  - ‘Location of advisement’



# What works well?

- Easy transferring into ISU (5 responses; 0.9%)
  - ‘Transition from a different university was very smooth’
  - ‘Talk to him about the process of being a transfer student’
  - ‘How smoothly registering for classes was when I transferred to ISU’
  - ‘Made transferring from another school very successful’
  - ‘Make the transition as smooth as possible’

# What works well?

- Encouraged and/or mandatory meetings (10 responses; 1.7%)
  - ‘Sign up in advance for my Sophomore Group Advisement Meeting and multiple times that are available’
  - ‘Suggesting that each student meet with their advisors’
  - ‘Requirement to see your academic advisor twice during your freshman year’
  - ‘The university often encourages students to visit their advisers’
  - ‘Mandatory meeting with advisers’

# What works well?

- Long-term planning and/or goal setting (25 responses; 4.4%)
  - ‘Really focus on what I need to do to be successful in college’
  - ‘Showed me how the rest of my time at Illinois State would pan out’
  - ‘Gives me tips and information about my future and what I need to take to meet my goal’
  - ‘Contribute to guiding me towards my degree, my major, and my future’
  - ‘Spend time with you to make sure you are following a certain path’

# What works well?

- Finding answers when don't know them (7 responses; 1.2%)
  - 'Finds the people I need to contact for more information on major topics'
  - 'When they don't know the answer to something, they find a way for you to find the answers to questions'
  - 'Advisors would tell me that they didn't know and immediately get on the phone'
  - 'If they don't know, they will find out for you'
  - 'Are honest if they aren't sure about something'

# What works well?

- One-on-one meetings (12 responses; 2.1%)
  - ‘Face to face, once a semester meetings’
  - ‘One on one sessions for advisement’
  - ‘Only one advisor, who knows all his students on a first-name basis. I like that one-on-one relationship’
  - ‘Able to talk one on one’
  - ‘One-on-one planning’

# What works well?

- Major-specific advisors (8 responses; 1.4%)
  - ‘Separate academic advisors for different sequences within a Major’
  - ‘I have a specific advisor for my major’
  - ‘Specialization you receive by having an academic advisor that deals with only a few majors’
  - ‘Multiple advisors within a major and access to all of them’
  - ‘Matched with advisors in the area they are studying in’

# What works well?

- Miscellaneous (96 responses; 16.7%)

404 responses in 11 categories (4 had subcategories)

**WHAT SUGGESTIONS?**



# What suggestions?

- Communication and/or coordination between different sets of advisors (13 responses; 3.2%)
  - ‘Communication improvement between advisors’
  - ‘When transferring from one college to another within ISU, the academic advisers in both college refused to be helpful’
  - ‘Communication between people seems to be lacking’
  - ‘Everyone in my major heard different information from advisors’
  - ‘Have a way for the regular academic advisors and the \* advisors to communicate’

# What suggestions?

- Consistent advisors across college (18 responses; 4.5%)
  - ‘Transition between your first adviser and your departmental adviser could stand some improving’
  - ‘Have a better transition for students so they know who they are supposed to be seeing next year’
  - ‘Suggest that each student sees only one advisor throughout their college career’
  - ‘Had NO assistance in finding out who my new advisor would be for my major nor was I given any contact information with them’
  - ‘Starting advising with the person you will eventually be with if you come in with a major already’

# What suggestions?

- Online and/or over-the phone services (25 responses; 6.2%)
  - ‘Implement some kind of automatic reminder system via email or even text message’
  - ‘Set up an online advising center’
  - ‘Make advising available over the phone’
  - ‘Online scheduling would be a great addition’
  - ‘Provide phone meetings with students since not everyone is on campus during the scheduled office hours’

# What suggestions?

- Transfer student concerns (7 responses; 1.7%)
  - ‘Do not treat transfers as freshman’
  - ‘On transfer day, the group advising session is not very efficient’
  - ‘Improve the clarity for students that transfer as far as what classes transfer, which classes don’t, and why they do not transfer’
  - ‘With an Associate’s Degree, it would have been EXTREMELY helpful to meet with the academic advisor in the major I wanted to get in to’
  - ‘More information available to students about transfer details and how to get in contact with an advisor’

# What suggestions?

- Quicker phone and/or e-mail responses (17 responses; 4.2%)
  - ‘Make it easier to contact them’
  - ‘More reachable’
  - ‘Be a little more prompt when responding to e-mails and/or phone calls’
  - ‘Take up to three months (happened twice) to respond to a simple email’
  - ‘Don’t seem to have enough time to read their emails because my emails to my advisor seem to be lost or accidentally deleted quite frequently’

# What suggestions?

- Suggest clubs and/or activities outside of academics (11 responses; 2.7%)
  - ‘Advisors refer students to other resources that might be beneficial or of interest for the students’
  - ‘My advisor has not informed of volunteer work or activities that I could be doing around campus’
  - Suggest clubs or other activities we should be involved in. Or check in and see if we are involved’
  - ‘Mention some resources because students (especially non-traditional) are not aware of all campus resources’
  - ‘Suggest clubs on campus pertaining to your interests or major/minor’

# What suggestions?

- Personal characteristics (61 responses; 15.1%)
  - Friendly and/or more personable (33 responses; 8.2%)
  - More accommodating of abilities (9 responses; 2.2%)
  - Prepared and/or advocate for students (19 responses; 4.7%)

# What suggestions?

- Friendly and/or more personable
  - ‘Be more willing to help students with a POSITIVE attitude’
  - ‘Remove the advisors who dislike or show no interest in students welfare’
  - ‘Wish I felt like my advisor cared about my success more’
  - ‘When I say hello in the hallways they simply ignore me’
  - ‘More personal and have them reach out to us’



# What suggestions?

- More accommodating of abilities
  - ‘Offer suggestions, but allow students to make their own choices’
  - ‘Learn to listen to students’ abilities and help them’
  - ‘Be more accommodating for ‘non-traditional’ students’
  - ‘Have more resources available for students that need extra help’
  - ‘Allow students to be in control of the classes they wish to take, and should not discourage students from taking difficult classes’

# What suggestions?

- Prepared and/or advocate for students
  - ‘Do not doubt the student and tell them they will not make it through college’
  - ‘Be prepared and professional for meetings’
  - ‘Know more about the student whom is coming in for advisement’
  - ‘Don’t discourage someone from a goal’
  - ‘To be more strong in the student’s education’

# What suggestions?

- Professional characteristics (74 responses; 18.3%)
  - Knowledgeable and/or accountable (32 responses; 7.9%)
  - Graduation requirements (16 responses; 4.0%)
  - Major and/or minor generalities and/or specifics (26 responses; 6.4%)

# What suggestions?

- Knowledgeable and/or accountable
  - ‘Provide more direction for students’
  - ‘Need to be more knowledgeable’
  - ‘That he or she is absolutely sure about the information they give’
  - ‘They advised me to take a class that required a prerequisite and I had not taken the prerequisite’
  - ‘Be more knowledgeable about University Policies’

# What suggestions?

- Graduation requirements
  - ‘Need to be more aware of times when classes should be taken’
  - ‘Advisors have prevented them from graduating on time or have told them that a certain number of hours is enough when it is not enough to be full time’
  - ‘Make sure students know that 15 credit hours is the right amount in order to graduate in 4 years’
  - ‘Better explain the requirements for graduation’
  - ‘Need to help students so that they are capable of actually graduating on time’

# What suggestions?

- Major and/or minor generalities and/or specifics
  - ‘Have the major advisors actually aware of what is required for the sequence’
  - ‘Encourage people to look into minors or double majoring to make the students more marketable’
  - ‘Show me career options and what a career in my field would entail’
  - ‘More real world experience talk over academic discussions pertaining to my major’
  - ‘Help if my adviser was more knowledgeable about my minor’

# What suggestions?

- Personnel characteristics (79 responses; 20.0%)
  - More advisors (47 responses; 11.6%)
  - Feel rushed (12 responses; 3.0%)
  - More time with advisors (11 responses; 2.7%)
  - More times available (9 responses; 2.2%)

# What suggestions?

- More advisors
  - ‘Having a closer student to adviser ratio’
  - ‘Need more advisors’
  - ‘Each department on campus NEEDS to have more than one adviser’
  - ‘More advisors or less course work for professor who advise students’
  - All programs should have that one-on-one feel’



# What suggestions?

- Feel rushed
  - ‘Always in a hurry’
  - ‘I feel very rushed with my advisement’
  - ‘Meeting are rushed and so impersonal’
  - ‘Feel like my academic advisor is always in a rush to get me out of her office’
  - ‘Individual session would allow for more personalized sessions’

# What suggestions?

- More time with advisors
  - ‘Longer and more in-depth appointments’
  - ‘Helpful to plan that the academic meetings take more than fifteen minutes’
  - ‘Need to be a longer time with the advisers during Preview and make more One-on-One’
  - ‘Appointments could run a little longer’
  - ‘Have longer appointments or let the students tell the advisor how long they feel they need for their appointments’

# What suggestions?

- More times available
  - ‘Not to over book appointments’
  - ‘Need more hours for the students’
  - ‘More times to meet with an adviser’
  - ‘More available walk-in times’
  - ‘More advisors with more time slots for appointments’

# What suggestions?

- Advisor duties (46 responses; 11.4%)
  - Require meetings (37 responses; 9.2%)
  - Contact students (9 responses; 2.2%)

# What suggestions?

- Require meetings
  - ‘Make students go to advisement’
  - ‘Should at least meet with their advisors at least once a semester’
  - ‘All students should have to see an academic advisor at least 3 times during the semester’
  - ‘Make it a requirement for students to see their academic advisors at least a couple times a month’
  - ‘Have it a requirement for students to meet with their advisors at least once a week or once a month’

# What suggestions?

- Contact students
  - ‘Email me some ideas for the next semester before we meet in person by appointment’
  - ‘Like my adviser to contact me at some point during the semester’
  - ‘When reminders are given pertaining to deadlines’
  - ‘Call us in the first week of school and check in with us to see if any of our plans have changed over the summer’
  - ‘Have the academic advisors suggest a meeting being set up’

# What suggestions?

- Miscellaneous (53 responses; 13.1%)

Questions?

Comments?

Concerns?



# Thanks for inviting me!

- Derek Herrmann
- Coordinator, University Assessment Services
- Uptown Crossing 212G
- (309) 438-7325
- [djherrm@ilstu.edu](mailto:djherrm@ilstu.edu)
- [www.assessment.illinoisstate.edu](http://www.assessment.illinoisstate.edu)