

## Best Practices for Evaluating Academic Advising

*By Izabela Szymanska, Organizational Science Doctoral Program; Graduate Assistant, Academic Services, 2011*

### **General recommendations**

UNC Charlotte administers a variety of surveys that aim to gauge student satisfaction and learning outcomes. Among these assessments are the UNC General Administration Sophomore and Senior Surveys, as well as the SOAR (Student Orientation, Advising and Registration) survey which include questions to evaluate the quality of academic advising. However, the comprehensive nature of these assessment tools prevents them from giving a complex picture of the multitude of dimensions in the advising process. The results of a department chair survey conducted in Spring 2008 indicated that there was room for more assessment of advising quality and outcomes at both the departmental and college levels. A comprehensive assessment of academic advising programs should include a variety of qualitative and quantitative assessment tools; however, most assessment programs rely heavily, sometimes solely, on student satisfaction surveys (Hurt, 2004). The assessment of academic advising should incorporate several dimensions of the advising process and not focus merely on student satisfaction. These dimensions (which also include student satisfaction) are listed and discussed below. In addition, assessment should not be limited to students; advisors' experiences are crucial for the successful advising process and need to be explored (Cuseo, 2003).

It is generally good practice to include in the assessment open-ended responses for qualitative analysis. Apart from open-ended questions, qualitative forms of assessment can also include methods like focus groups (Demetriou, 2005).

There are several external (“ready-made”) instruments that can be used in assessing the quality and impact of academic advising. Some of them are listed in this document as possible tools to be considered by academic departments. However, it is also necessary to bear in mind that each campus, as well as department, is unique, and assessment often needs to be tailored to suit the specifics of the advising process.

Through the advising process students should not only obtain information on how to graduate in a timely fashion, but also develop independent thinking skills, good understanding of career paths in their chosen fields, as well as gain knowledge about available campus resources designed to address their needs. Proper assessment of various aspects of an academic advising program is key to strengthening it in any institutional context.

Evaluation of academic advising should be focused on several dimensions:

1. Nature of the advising relationship

2. Frequency of different types of activities that take place during advising sessions
3. Students' satisfaction with academic advising
4. Students' outcomes (increases in knowledge of academic environment, understanding of career goals etc.). Note: this section is intended to measure advising outcomes outlined for UNC Charlotte.
5. Advisors' satisfaction

### **Assessing the nature of the advising relationship (developmental vs. prescriptive)**

Developmental and prescriptive advising form a continuum between two contrasting behavioral styles and attitudes perceived by students (Winston & Sander, 2002).

In developmental style of academic advising advisors form a warm and friendly relationship with a student. Advising is based on a concern for the student's total education, which entails teaching students how to deal with various challenges that arise in collegiate environment. Advisors aim at understanding students' skills, abilities, aspirations and life situation. They seek students' input when forming recommendations.

Prescriptive advising relationships are based on authority. Typically the advisor diagnoses student's problems and gives detailed instructions on how to deal with them. In this type of relationship formal academic matters are the exclusive or primary focus of advising.

Students differ in their preferences for developmental and prescriptive academic advising. It is also possible that some cohorts of students respond better to developmental or prescriptive styles. This issue can be explored by incorporating advising relationship into the assessment of academic advising.

**Reference/Possible Tool:** Part I of the Academic Advising Inventory, Winston & Sander (2002), Attachment I

### **Measuring frequency at which various types of activities take place during advising sessions**

These types of activities can include:

- Discussing:
  - academic policies (departmental, college, university)
  - personal values
  - career goals

- possible majors/academic concentrations
- content of courses
- transfer credit and policies
- career alternatives
- financial aid
- study skills or study tips
- degree or major/academic concentration requirements
- personal concerns or problems
- internship or cooperative education opportunities
- Grades / GPA questions
- study abroad
- academic petition or a special request
- concerns related to professor / faculty
- non-academic concerns (i.e. personal problems, life issues, etc)
- Other: .....
- Selecting courses for the next term
- Dropping and/or adding course(s)
- Identifying other campus offices that can provide assistance
- Evaluating academic progress

***Reference/Possible Tool:*** Part II of the Academic Advising Inventory (Attachment I)

### **Measuring student satisfaction**

Possible questions can include:

1. How satisfied are you with:
  - a) General quality of academic advising that you have received
  - b) Information about courses, programs, and requirements through academic advising
  - c) Information about deadlines related to institutional policies and procedures
  - d) Availability of academic advising
  - e) Amount of time in each advising session

Questions can be evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5 (5= very satisfied, 1 = very dissatisfied)

2. Please rate your academic advisor on the following criteria:  
(This question can form an independent assessment of the advisor)
  - a) My advisor was prepared for my appointment
  - b) My advisor listened to my concerns
  - c) My advisor seemed genuinely interested in me
  - d) My advisor provided me with accurate information
  - e) My advisor referred me to appropriate campus resources as needed
  - f) My advisor was courteous and professional
  - g) My advisor clearly communicates what is my responsibility and what she can do for me
  - h) My advisor is helpful in discussing my career plans and goals
  - i) I feel confident that my advisor will follow up on any unresolved issues
  - j) Overall, my advisor is a good source for academic advice about my college (department) and university

Questions can be evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5 (5= strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree).

***Reference/Possible Tool:***

Advisor Assessment Instrument (Student Survey) by Cuseo (2003), Attachment II



UNC Charlotte Belk College of Business Advising Center Survey available at:

<http://www.surveymshare.com/survey/preview.php?sid=102450>

**Measuring student outcomes** (advising outcomes outlined for UNC Charlotte)

As a result of the academic advising process at UNC Charlotte, students will be able to:

- evaluate personal interests and abilities leading to the creation of realistic academic and professional goals.
- access and navigate the University online resources and processes.
- develop an educational plan that leads to the timely completion of their educational goals.
- access university academic and student support services and resources.
- follow academic and administrative policies and procedures.
- develop the critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make and accept responsibility for academic decisions.
- discover and integrate co- and extra-curricular activities and programs that enhance the collegiate experience.

Consistent with these intended outcomes potential questions can include:

1. Academic advising has increased my understanding of . . . .
  - a) my interests
  - b) my abilities
  - c) my life goals
  - d) my career goals
  - e) university policies and procedures
  - f) available courses
  - g) student support services and resources
  - h) degree requirements
  - i) majors available at UNC at Charlotte

- j) majors consistent with my career goals
  - k) available paths that lead to timely completion of my academic goals
  - l) co- and extra-curricular activities and programs
  - m) university online resources
2. Thanks to the advising services that I have received I feel more confident in my future at UNC at Charlotte.
  3. As the result of advising services that I have received I developed critical thinking and independent decision-making skills to make my own academic decisions.

Answers can be evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5 (5= strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree)

**Reference/Similar Tool:** Advising Assessment Survey, Purdue University; Attachment III.

### **Assessing advisors' satisfaction**

Possible questions can include:

1. How rewarding do you find the experience of being an academic advisor?  
(5= very rewarding, 1= not rewarding at all)
2. How do you rate the effectiveness of academic advising process in your department?  
(5= very effective, 1= very ineffective)
3. Students come prepared when meeting with their academic advisor.  
(5= strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree)
4. Students play an active role when meeting with their academic advisor.  
(5= strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree)
5. What do you find to be the most rewarding aspect of academic advising?
6. What do you find to be the most frustrating or dissatisfying aspect of academic advising?
7. What type(s) of additional personal or institutional support would you need to make

the advising process more effective and/or satisfying?

**Reference/Possible Tool:** Academic Advisement Program Evaluation (Advisor Survey) by Cuseo (2003), Attachment II

### **Demographic information**

In order to study different cohorts that use academic advising it is necessary to collect the following demographic information on both students and academic advisors:

#### Students

1. What is your gender?
  - (a) male
  - (b) female
  
2. What is your cultural/racial background?
  - (a) African American/Black
  - (b) Hispanic American/Latino/a Pacific Islander
  - (c) Native American
  - (d) Asian American
  - (e) White/Caucasian
  - (f) Other
  - (g) Biracial/multiracial
  - (h) Decline to respond
  
3. What is your academic class standing?
  - (a) Freshman (first year)
  - (c) Sophomore (second year)
  - (e) Junior (third year)
  - (b) Senior (fourth or more years)
  - (d) Transient Student
  - (f) Other than any of the above
  
4. What is your current over-all GPA?
  1. 1.49 or less
  2. 1.5 – 1.99
  3. 2.0 – 2.49
  4. 2.5 – 2.99
  5. 3.0 – 3.49
  6. 3.5 – 3.99

7. More than 4.0

5. What college are you in?

- (a) Arts and Architecture
- (b) Business
- (c) Computing & Informatics
- (d) Education
- (e) Engineering
- (f) Health & Human Services
- (g) Liberal Arts & Sciences
- (h) University College (undeclared or transitioning student)

6. What department are you in?

- (a) Accounting
- (b) Aerospace Studies
- (c) Africana Studies
- (d) Anthropology
- (e) Art & History
- (f) Biology
- (g) Business Information Systems & Operations Management
- (h) Chemistry
- (i) Civil & Environmental Engineering
- (j) Communication Studies
- (k) Computer Science
- (l) Criminal Justice & Criminology
- (m) Dance
- (n) Economics
- (o) Electrical & Computer Engineering
- (p) Engineering & Engineering Management
- (q) Engineering Technology
- (r) Engineering Technology
- (s) English
- (t) Finance
- (u) Geography & Earth Sciences
- (v) Global & International & Area Studies
- (w) History
- (x) Interdisciplinary Studies
- (y) Kinesiology
- (z) Languages & Culture Studies
- (aa) Management
- (bb) Marketing

- (cc) Mathematics & Statistics
- (dd) Mechanical Engineering & Engineering Science
- (ee) Middle, Secondary and K-12 Education
- (ff) Military Science
- (gg) Music
- (hh) Philosophy
- (ii) Physics & Optical Sciences
- (jj) Political Science
- (kk) Psychology
- (ll) Public Health Sciences
- (mm) Reading & Elementary Education
- (nn) Religious Studies
- (oo) School of Architecture
- (pp) School of Nursing
- (qq) Social work
- (rr) Sociology
- (ss) Software & Information Systems
- (tt) Special Education and Child Development
- (uu) Theater

7. On average, how much time was generally spent in each advising session?

- 1. less than 15 minutes
- 2. 15-30 minutes
- 3. 31-45 minutes
- 4. 46-60 minutes
- 5. more than 1 hour

8. How many academic advising sessions have you had this academic year?

- (a) none
- (b) one
- (c) two
- (d) three
- (e) four
- (f) five
- (g) six
- (h) seven
- (i) eight
- (j) nine or more

### Advisors

1. What is your gender?
  - (a) male
  - (b) female
  
2. What is your cultural/racial background?
  - (a) African American/Black
  - (b) Hispanic American/Latino/a Pacific Islander
  - (c) Native American
  - (d) Asian American
  - (e) White/Caucasian
  - (f) Other
  - (g) Biracial/multiracial
  - (h) Decline to respond
  
3. What is your status as an advisor?
  - (a) Faculty Advisor
  - (b) Advising Professional

*For faculty advisors only*

4. What college are you in?
  - (a) Arts and Architecture
  - (b) Business
  - (c) Computing & Informatics
  - (d) Education
  - (e) Engineering
  - (f) Health & Human Services
  - (g) Liberal Arts & Sciences
  
5. What department are you in?
  - (a) Accounting
  - (b) Aerospace Studies
  - (c) Africana Studies
  - (d) Anthropology
  - (e) Art & History
  - (f) Biology
  - (g) Business Information Systems & Operations Management
  - (h) Chemistry
  - (i) Civil & Environmental Engineering
  - (j) Communication Studies
  - (k) Computer Science

- (l) Criminal Justice & Criminology
- (m) Dance
- (n) Economics
- (o) Electrical & Computer Engineering
- (p) Engineering & Engineering Management
- (q) Engineering Technology
- (r) Engineering Technology
- (s) English
- (t) Finance
- (u) Geography & Earth Sciences
- (v) Global & International & Area Studies
- (w) History
- (x) Kinesiology
- (y) Languages & Culture Studies
- (z) Management
- (aa) Marketing
- (bb) Mathematics & Statistics
- (cc) Mechanical Engineering & Engineering Science
- (dd) Middle, Secondary and K-12 Education
- (ee) Military Science
- (ff) Music
- (gg) Philosophy
- (hh) Physics & Optical Sciences
- (ii) Political Science
- (jj) Psychology
- (kk) Public Health Sciences
- (ll) Reading & Elementary Education
- (mm) Religious Studies
- (nn) School of Architecture
- (oo) School of Nursing
- (pp) Social work
- (qq) Sociology
- (rr) Software & Information Systems
- (ss) Special Education and Child Development
- (tt) Theater

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# ATTACHMENT 1



4. My advisor shows an interest in my outside-of-class activities and sometimes suggests activities.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- My advisor does not know what I do outside of class.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true
5. My advisor assists me in identifying realistic academic goals based on what I know about myself, as well as about my test scores and grades.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- My advisor identifies realistic academic goals for me based on my test scores and grades.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true
6. My advisor registers me for my classes.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- My advisor teaches me how to register myself for classes.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true
7. When I'm faced with difficult decisions my advisor tells me my alternatives and which one is the best choice.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- When I'm faced with difficult decisions, my advisor assists me in identifying alternatives and in considering the consequences of choosing each alternative.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true
8. My advisor does not know who to contact about other-than-academic problems.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- My advisor knows who to contact about other-than-academic problems.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true
9. My advisor gives me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively when I seem to need them.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- My advisor does not spend time giving me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true
10. My advisor tells me what I must do in order to be advised.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- My advisor and I discuss our expectations of advising and of each other.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true
11. My advisor suggests what I should major in.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- My advisor suggests steps I can take to help me decide on a major.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true
12. My advisor uses test scores and grades to let him or her know what courses are most appropriate for me to take.
- A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true
- OR**
- My advisor and I use information, such as test scores, grades, interests, and abilities, to determine what courses are most appropriate for me to take.
- E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true

13. My advisor talks with me about my other-than-academic interests and plans.

**OR**

My advisor does not talk with me about interests and plans other than academic ones.

**A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true

**E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true

14. My advisor keeps me informed of my academic progress by examining my files and grades *only*.

**OR**

My advisor keeps informed of my academic progress by examining my files and grades and by talking to me about my classes.

**A-----B-----C-----D**  
 very slightly  
 true true

**E-----F-----G-----H**  
 slightly very  
 true true

## PART II

**Directions**-Consider the following activities that often take place during academic advising. During **this academic year**, how many times have you been involved in each activity? Use the code below to respond to questions 15-44 on the separate answer sheet.

**A=None** (0 times)

**C=2 times**

**E=4 times**

**B=1 time**

**D=3 times**

**F=5 or more times**

### How frequently have you and your advisor spent time...

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 15. Discussing college policies                                  | 31. Discussing degree or major/academic concentration requirements |
| 16. Signing registration forms                                   | 32. Discussing personal concerns or problems                       |
| 17. Dropping and/or adding course(s)                             | 33. Discussing studies abroad or other special academic programs   |
| 18. Discussing personal values                                   | 34. Discussing internship or cooperative education opportunities   |
| 19. Discussing possible majors/academic concentrations           | 35. Talking about or setting personal goals                        |
| 20. Discussing important social or political issues              | 36. Evaluating academic progress                                   |
| 21. Discussing content of courses                                | 37. Getting to know each other                                     |
| 22. Selecting courses for the next term                          | 38. Discussing extracurricular activities                          |
| 23. Planning a class schedule for the next term                  | 39. Discussing job placement opportunities                         |
| 24. Discussing transfer credit and policies                      | 40. Discussing the purposes of a college education                 |
| 25. Discussing advanced placement or exempting courses           | 41. Declaring or changing a major/academic concentration           |
| 26. Discussing career alternatives                               | 42. Discussing time management                                     |
| 27. Discussing probation and dismissal policies                  | 43. Talking about experiences in different classes                 |
| 28. Discussing financial aid                                     | 44. Talking about what you are doing besides taking classes        |
| 29. Identifying other campus offices that can provide assistance |  |
| 30. Discussing study skills or study tips                        |  |

### PART III

Considering the academic advising you have participated in at this college this year, respond to the following five statements on the answer sheet using the code below.

**A = Strongly Disagree**

**C = Agree**

**B = Disagree**

**D = Strongly Agree**

45. I am satisfied in general with the academic advising I have received.
46. I have received accurate information about courses, programs, and requirements through academic advising.
47. Sufficient prior notice has been provided about deadlines related to institutional policies and procedures.
48. Advising has been available when I needed it.
49. Sufficient time has been available during advising sessions.

### PART IV

Please respond to the following questions. Continue marking your responses on the same answer sheet.

50. What is your sex?
  - (a) male
  - (b) female
51. What is your cultural/racial background?
 

(a) African American/Black	(c) Asian American or Pacific Islander	(e) White/Caucasian	(g) Other
(b) Hispanic American/Latino/a	(d) Native American	(f) Biracial/multiracial	(h) Decline to respond
52. What was your age at your last birthday?
 

(a) 18 or younger	(c) 20	(e) 22	(g) 24	(i) 31 or older
(b) 19	(d) 21	(f) 23	(h) 25 - 30	
53. What is your academic class standing?
 

(a) Freshman (first year)	(c) Junior (third year)	(e) Irregular/Transient/Special Student
(b) Sophomore (second year)	(d) Senior (fourth or more years)	(f) Other than any of the above
54. Which of the following **best describes** the majority of the academic advising you have received this academic year? *Select only one.*
  - (a) Advised individually by assigned advisor at an advising center
  - (b) Advised individually by any available advisor at an advising center
  - (c) Advised individually, **not** through an advising center
  - (d) Advised with a group of students
  - (e) Advised by a peer (student) advisor
  - (f) Advised in conjunction with a course in which I was enrolled
  - (g) Advised in a manner other than the alternatives described above
  - (h) No advising received
55. Approximately how much time was generally spent in each advising session?
 

(a) less than 15 minutes	(c) 31-45 minutes	(e) more than 1 hour
(b) 15-30 minutes	(d) 46-60 minutes	
56. How many academic advising sessions have you had this academic year in your **current** situation?
 

(a) none	(c) two	(e) four	(g) six	(i) eight
(b) one	(d) three	(f) five	(h) seven	(j) nine or more
57. How many academic advising sessions **in total** have you had this year?
 

(a) none	(c) two	(e) four	(g) six	(i) eight
(b) one	(d) three	(f) five	(h) seven	(j) nine or more

# ATTACHMENT 2

# **ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS AND ACADEMIC ADVISING PROGRAMS**

*Joe Cuseo*  
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## **THE CASE FOR ATTENTION TO ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC ADVISMENT**

The contemporary relevance and cross-institutional significance of advisor and advising program evaluation is highlighted by the most recent of five national surveys of academic advising, which reveals that only 29% of postsecondary institutions evaluate advisor effectiveness (Habley & Morales, 1998). Upcraft, Srebnik, & Stevenson (1995) state categorically that, “The most ignored aspect of academic advising in general, and first-year student academic advising in particular, is assessment” (p. 141).

Evaluating the effectiveness of academic advisors and advisement programs sends a strong and explicit message to all members of the college community that advising is an important professional responsibility; conversely, failure to do so tacitly communicates the message that this student service is not highly valued by the institution. As Linda Darling-Hammond, higher education research specialist for the Rand Corporation, once said: “If there’s one thing social science research has found consistently and unambiguously. . .it’s that people will do more of whatever they are evaluated on doing. What is measured will increase, and what is not measured will decrease. That’s why assessment is such a powerful activity. It cannot only measure, but change reality” (quoted in Hutchings & Marchese, 1990). In addition, the particular items that comprise an evaluation instrument illustrate the specific practices and concrete behaviors that define “good advising” at the institution, i.e., what the college hopes those being evaluated will strive for, or aspire to; thus, the instrument can function not only as a measure of reality (what is), but also as a prompt or stimulus that promotes professional behavior that more closely approximates the ideal (what should be).

Advisor evaluation is also inextricably related to other important advising issues, such as advisor (a) clarification of the meaning and purpose of academic advising, (b) recruitment and selection, (c) orientation, training, and development, and (d) recognition and reward. As Elizabeth Creamer concludes, “The failure of the majority of institutions to evaluate and reward academic advising systematically has been an ongoing concern. This failure has been attributed to two interrelated factors: the failure of institutions to define what constitutes good advising and the failure to identify ways to measure it” (p. 119).

Consider the following findings, based on national advising surveys conducted regularly by American College Testing (ACT) since the late 1970s, which repeatedly point to the following elements as essential, but often missing pieces of an effective academic advisement program.

### **1. Clarification of the *meaning and purpose* of academic advising.**

In 1992, only 60% of postsecondary institutions had a written policy statement on advising, and many of these published statements did not include well defined program goals, objectives, or methods of evaluation (Habley, 1993). At best, this suggests a lack of clarity about program mission and goals; at worst, it suggests that advising is not considered to be a bona fide program with an educational mission.

## **2. Provision of *incentives, recognition, and reward* for effective academic advising.**

Approximately one-half of faculty contracts and collective bargaining agreements make absolutely no mention of advising as a faculty responsibility (Teague & Grites, 1980). Less than one-third of campuses recognize and reward faculty for advising and, among those that do, advising is typically rewarded by giving it only minor consideration in promotion and tenure decisions (Habley & Habley, 1988).

In a recent review of national survey findings on reward and recognition for academic advising, Creamer & Scott (2000) reached the following conclusion: “The failure of most institutions to conduct systematic evaluations of advisors is explained by a number of factors. The most potent reason, however, is probably that the traditional reward structure often blocks the ability to reward faculty who are genuinely committed to advising” (p. 39).

## **3. *Recruitment and selection* of academic advisors.**

Over two-thirds (68%) of postsecondary institutions surveyed have no criteria for selecting advisors (Crockett, Habley, & Cowart, 1987), suggesting an absence of attention to professional preparedness, and failure to identify advisors who would be most qualified to work with high-risk students or students with special needs, such as first-generation college students, academically under-prepared students, undecided students, transfer students, commuter students, and re-entry students. (Also, how often do you see academic advising mentioned as one of the selection criteria listed in job advertisements or position announcements from postsecondary institutions seeking to recruit and hire new faculty?)

## **4. *Orientation, training, and development* of academic advisors.**

Only about one-third of college campuses *provide* training for faculty advisors; less than one-quarter *require* faculty training; and the vast majority of institutions offering training programs focus solely on dissemination of factual information, without paying any attention to identifying the goals or objectives of advising, and the development of effective advising strategies or relationship skills (Habley, 1988).

The upshot of all these disturbing findings is encapsulated in the following conclusion reached by Habley (2000), based on his review of findings from five national surveys of academic advising, dating back to 1979: “A recurrent theme, found in all five ACT surveys, is that training, evaluation, and recognition and reward have been, and continue to be, the weakest links in academic advising throughout the nation. These important institutional practices in support of quality advising are at best unsystematic and at worst nonexistent” (p. 40).

Furthermore, advisor evaluation has major implications for student *satisfaction* with, and *retention* at, the college they have chosen to attend.

## **RATIONALE FOR THE CONTENT OF AN ADVISOR EVALUATION INSTRUMENT**

The specific items that comprise the content of an advisor evaluation instrument should be grounded in research on common characteristics or qualities of advisors that students seek and value. Research repeatedly points to the conclusion that students value most highly academic advisors who are seen as: (1) available/accessible, (2) knowledgeable/helpful, (3) personable/approachable, and (4) counselors/mentors (Winston, Ender, & Miller, 1982; Winston, Miller, Ender, Grites, & Associates, 1984; Frost, 1991; Gordon, Habley, & Associates, 2000).

Each one of these general “core” qualities of effective advisors may be defined in terms

of more specific advisor roles and responsibilities, as follows:

- 1) **Available/Accessible:** An advisor is someone who effectively communicates and interacts with students outside the classroom, and does so more informally, more frequently, and on a more long-term basis than course instructors. A student's instructors will vary from term to term, but an academic advisor is the one institutional representative with whom the student can have continuous contact and an ongoing relationship that may endure throughout the college experience.
- 2) **Knowledgeable/Helpful:** An advisor is an effective consultant—a role that may be said to embrace the following functions: (a) *Resource Agent*—one who provides accurate and timely information about the curriculum, co-curriculum, college policies, and administrative procedures. (b) *Interpreter*—one who helps students make sense of, and develop appreciation for the college mission, curricular requirements (e.g., the meaning, value, and purpose of general education), and co-curricular experiences (e.g., the importance of out-of-class experiences for student learning and development). (c) *Liaison/Referral Agent*—one who connects students with key academic support and student development services. (d) *Teacher/Educator*—one who helps students gain self-insight into their interests, aptitudes, and values; who enables students to see the “connection” between their academic experience and their future life plans; and who promotes students’ cognitive skills in problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking with respect to present and future educational choices.
- 3) **Personable/Approachable:** An advisor is a humanizing or personalizing agent with whom students feel comfortable seeking out, who knows students by name, and who takes a personal interest in individual students’ experiences, progress, and development.
- 4) **Counselor/Mentor:** An advisor is an advocate who students can turn to for advice, counsel, guidance, or direction; who listens actively and empathically; and who responds to students in a non-judgmental manner—treating them as clients to be mentored—rather than as subordinates to be evaluated (or graded).

These four advisor roles can be used to generate related clusters of advisor characteristics or behaviors that represent the content (rating items) of an advisor evaluation instrument. An example of such an instrument is provided in Appendix A (pp. 15-17). While the foregoing synthesis of advisor roles may be useful for guiding construction of specific items on the advisor evaluation instrument, the scholarly literature on academic advising strongly suggests that advisor evaluation should originate with, and be driven by, a clear *mission statement* that reflects consensual or communal understanding of the overarching meaning and purpose of the academic advisement program (White, 2000). This statement of program purpose should be consistent with, and connected to the college mission statement, thus underscoring the centrality of the advisement program and its pivotal role in the realization of broader institutional goals. Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates (1991) report from campus visits that connection between program purpose and institutional mission characterizes educational program delivery at “involving” colleges, i.e., colleges with a strong track record of actively engaging students in the college experience. As they put it, “Policies and practices at Involving Colleges are effective because they are mission-driven and are constantly evaluated to assess their contributions to educational purposes” (p. 156).

The purpose statement for an academic advisement program should also serve as a springboard or launching pad that drives and directs the development of an effective evaluation plan. If the college does not take time to develop a carefully constructed statement that explicitly captures the essential purpose and priorities of its advising

program, then individual advisors may develop different conceptions and philosophies about what advising should be, and their individual advising practices may vary in nature (and quality), depending on what particular advising philosophy or viewpoint they hold. In fact, research indicates that there is fairly high consistency between advisors' stated philosophy of advising and their actual advising behaviors or practices (Daller, Creamer, & Creamer, cited in Creamer & Scott, 2000). As Virginia Gordon (1995) points out, "Most faculty advisors, consciously or unconsciously, approach their advisees with a basic philosophical stance. Some believe students are totally responsible for their own actions; thus, advising contacts should always be initiated by the student. Others view themselves as resources and take initiative when students make contact and personally express a need or concern" (p. 95).

The following statements, culled from the scholarly literature on academic advising, have the potential to serve as models or heuristics that can help guide and shape the construction of an effective mission statement for advising programs.

(a) "Developmental academic advising is . . . a systematic process based on a close student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in achieving educational, career, and personal goals through the utilization of the full range of institutional and community resources. It both stimulates and supports students in their quest for an enriched quality of life" (Winston, Miller, Ender, & Grites, & Associates, 1984, p. 538)

(b) "The formation of relationships that assure that at least one educator has close enough contact with each student to assess and influence the quality of that student's educational experience is realistic only through a systematic process, such as an academic advising program. It is unrealistic to expect each instructor, even with small classes, to form personal relationships of sufficient duration and depth with each student in his or her class to accomplish this" (Winston, Miller, Ender, & Grites, & Associates, 1984, p. 538).

(c) "Developmental academic advising is *not* primarily an administrative function, *not* obtaining a signature to schedule classes, *not* a conference held once a term, not a paper relationship, *not* supplementary to the educational process, [and] *not* synonymous with faculty member" (Ender, 1983, p. 10).

(d) "Academic advising can be understood best and more easily reconceptualized if the process of academic advising and the scheduling of classes and registration are separated. Class scheduling should no be confused with educational planning. Developmental academic advising becomes a more realistic goal when separated from class scheduling because advising can then go on all during the academic year, not just during the few weeks prior to registration each new term. Advising programs, however, that emphasize registration and record keeping, while neglecting attention to students' educational and personal experiences in the institution, are missing an excellent opportunity to influence directly and immediately the quality of students' education and are also highly inefficient, since they are most likely employing highly educated (expensive) personnel who are performing essentially clerical tasks" (Winston, Miller, Ender, & Grites, & Associates, 1984, p. 542).

**STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS:  
CONSTRUCTION & ADMINISTRATION OF AN EVALUATION INSTRUMENT**

**1. Decide on whether you want to develop an *internal* (“home grown”) instrument, or import an external (“store bought”) standardized instrument from an assessment service or evaluation center.**

There are commercially developed instruments available that specifically target evaluation of academic advising—for example: (a) The ACT Survey of Academic Advising (American College Testing), (b) The Academic Advising Inventory (Winston & Sander), and (c) The Developmental Advising Inventory (Dickson & Thayer). For a review of standardized instruments designed to evaluate academic advising, see: Srebnik (1988). *NACADA Journal*, 8(1), 52-62. Also, for an annotated bibliography on advising evaluation and assessment, see the following website sponsored by the National Clearinghouse for Academic Advising, Ohio State University, and the National Academic Advising Association: [www.uvc-ohio-state.edu/chouse.html](http://www.uvc-ohio-state.edu/chouse.html)

Standardized instruments do come with the advantage of having already-established reliability and validity, as well as the availability of norms that allow for cross-institutional comparisons. However, if you feel that your college has unique, campus-specific concerns and objectives that would be best assessed via locally developed questions, or if you want an instrument that will elicit more qualitative data (written responses) than the typical quantitative data generated by standardized inventories, then it might be best to develop your own campus-specific instrument.

**2. Consider including *more than the four rating options* (strongly agree – agree – disagree – strongly disagree) that comprise the typical Likert-scale.**

The wider range of numerical options may result in mean (average) ratings for individual items that display a wider spread in absolute size or value. For instance, a 6-point scale may be superior to 4-point rating scales because the latter may yield mean ratings for separate items which vary so little in absolute size that advisors may tend to discount the small mean differences between items as being insignificant and inconsequential. For example, with a 4-option rating scale, an advisor might receive mean ratings for different items on the instrument that range from a low of 2.8 to a high of 3.3. Such a narrow range of differences in mean ratings can lead advisors to attribute these minuscule differences simply as random “error variance” or students' failure to respond in a discerning or discriminating manner.

An expanded 6-point scale has the potential to produce larger mean differences across individual items, thus providing more discriminating data. In fact, research on student evaluations of course instructors does suggest that a rating scale with fewer than five choices tends to reduce the instrument's ability to discriminate between satisfied and dissatisfied respondents, while a rating scale with more than seven choices does not add to the instrument's discriminability (Cashin, 1990).

In addition to providing advisors with mean scores per item, they may also be provided with the percentage of respondents who selected each response option. This statistic will reveal how student responses were distributed across all response options, thus providing advisors with potentially useful feedback about the degree of consistency (consensus) or variation (disagreement) among their advisees' ratings for each item on the instrument.

**3. Instructions for the advisor-evaluation instrument should strongly emphasize the need for, and importance of, students' *written* comments.**

Research on student evaluations of course instructors indicates that this type of feedback provides the most useful information for performance improvement (Seldin, 1992). (Indeed, the findings of many years of research on students' course evaluations may be directly applicable to the construction and administration of advisor-evaluation instruments. For a review of research and practice with respect to instructor evaluations, much of which can be applied to advisor evaluations, go to the following site: <http://www.Brevard.edu/fyc/listserv/index/htm>, scroll down to “Listserv Remarks” and click “Joe Cuseo, 10-20-00,” *Student Evaluations of College Courses*.)

**4. Beneath each item (statement) to be rated, it is recommended that some empty space be provided, preceded by the prompt, “Reason/explanation for rating: . . . .”**

Inclusion of such item-specific prompts has been found to increase the quantity of written comments student provide—and their quality, i.e., comments are more focused and concrete because they are anchored to a specific item (characteristic or behavior)—as opposed to the traditional practice of soliciting written comments solely at the end of the instrument—in response to a generic or global prompt, such as: “Final Comments?” (Cuseo, 2001).

Furthermore, the opportunity to provide a written response to each item allows students to *justify* their ratings, and enables us to gain some insight into *why* the rating was given.

**5. It is recommend that the instrument be kept *short*, containing no more than 12 advisor-evaluation items.**

For example, four 3-item clusters could be included that relate to each of the four aforementioned qualities of highly valued advisors. It has been the author’s experience that the longer an instrument is (i.e., the more reading time it requires), the less time students devote to writing and, consequently, fewer useful comments are provided.

**6. Toward the end of the instrument, *students* should be asked to *self-assess* their own effort and effectiveness as advisees.**

This portion of the instrument should serve to (a) raise students’ consciousness that they also need to take some personal responsibility in the advisement process for it to be effective, and (b) assure advisors that any evaluation of their effectiveness depends, at least in part, on the conscientiousness and cooperation of their advisees. (This, in turn, may serve to defuse the amount of threat or defensiveness experienced by advisors about being evaluated—a feeling that almost invariably accompanies any type of professional performance evaluation.)

**7. Decide on *when* to administer advisor/advising evaluations to students.**

One popular strategy is to ask instructors of all classes that meet at popular time slots (e.g., 11 AM and 1 PM) to “sacrifice” 15 minutes of class time to administer the advisor-evaluation instrument. This procedure may not be effective for a couple of reasons: (1) It can result in certain advisors obtaining only a small number of their advisees evaluations, because many of their advisees may not be taking classes at these times. (2) Some instructors are resentful about giving up any class time—particularly toward the end of the semester—to conduct an administrative task.

An alternative procedure for gathering a sufficient sample of student evaluations is to provide advisors with evaluation forms at about the midpoint of the spring term, and ask them to give each one of their advisees the form to complete as part of their *pre-*

*registration* process for the following term. In other words, when students meet with their advisor to plan their course schedule for the upcoming semester, the advisor asks them to complete the advisor evaluation form and submit it, along with their proposed schedule of classes, to the Registrar's Office. Thus, completing the advisor evaluation becomes a pre- or co-requisite for course registration. This should provide a strong incentive for students to complete the evaluation, which in turn, should ensure a very high return rate. Also, students would be completing their advisor evaluations at a time during the semester when they are not completing multiple instructor (course) evaluations—which typically are administered either during the last week of class or during final-exam week. There is no compelling reason for students to complete advisor evaluations at the very end of the term like they do course/instructor evaluations—which must be administered at the end of the term, because students need to experience the entire course before they can evaluate it. In contrast, student interaction with advisors is a process that traverses academic terms and does not have the same start and stop points as student interaction with course instructors.

For *graduating* students who will not be pre-registering for an upcoming term, they could be asked to complete their advisor evaluation as part of their *graduation-application* or *senior-audit* process. As for non-graduating students who do not pre-register for classes because they intend to *withdraw* from the college, they may be asked to complete an advisor evaluation as part of their *exit-interview* process. (Differences in perceptions of advising quality reported by returning versus non-returning students may provide revealing information on the relationship between advising and retention.)

**8. Before formally adopting an evaluation instrument, have *students* review it, either individually or in focus groups, to gather feedback about its clarity and comprehensiveness (e.g., if critical questions about advisors or the advising process have been overlooked).**

Also, consider adding an open-ended question at the end of the instrument that would ask students to assess the assessment instrument. (This could be referred to it as “meta-assessment”—the process of assessing the assessment by the assessor).

Ideally, an evaluation instrument should allow students not only rate items in terms of perceived satisfaction or effectiveness, but also in terms of perceived *need* or *importance*. In other words, students would give two ratings for each item on the instrument: (a) a rating of how satisfied they are with that item, and (b) a rating of how important that item is to them. The instrument could be structured to efficiently obtain both sets of ratings by centering the item statements (questions) in the middle of the page, with a “satisfaction” rating scale to the left of the item and an “importance” scale to the right of the same item.

Lee Noel and Randi Levitz, student retention researchers and consultants, have used this double-rating practice to identify institutional areas with large “performance gaps”—items for which students give low satisfaction ratings but high importance ratings, i.e., a large negative score is obtained when the satisfaction rating for an item is subtracted from its importance rating (Noel & Levitz, 1996). If this strategy were applied to advisor evaluation, those items that reveal high student ratings on importance but low ratings on satisfaction would provide particularly useful information. These items reflect high-priority student needs that they feel are not presently being met. As such, these items represent key target zones for improving academic advising—which, of course, is the ultimate purpose of assessment.

Applying this satisfaction-vs.-importance rating scheme to the advisor evaluation instrument would, in effect, enable it to co-function as a student *satisfaction* survey and a

student *needs assessment* survey. This would be especially advantageous because it would allow for the systematic collection of data on student needs. Historically, institutional research in higher education has made extensive use of satisfaction surveys, which are designed to assess how students feel about what *we* are doing; in contrast, comparatively short shrift has been given to assessing what *they* (our students) need and want from us. It could be argued that satisfaction surveys represent an *institution*-centered (or egocentric) form of assessment, while student needs assessment is a *learner*-centered form of assessment that resonates well with the new “learning paradigm” (Barr & Tagg, 1995) and the “student learning imperative” (American College Personnel Association, 1994).

**9. Before formally adopting a proposed instrument, feedback should be solicited from academic advisors with respect to its content and structure.**

Broad-based feedback should help to fine-tune the instrument and redress its shortcomings and oversights. More importantly, perhaps, this solicitation of feedback from advisors gives them an opportunity to provide input and provides them with a sense of personal ownership or control of the evaluation process. Advisors should feel that evaluation is something that is being done *with* or *for* them, rather than *to* them. In fact, “evaluation” may not be the best term to use for this process because it tends to immediately raise a red flag in the minds of advisors. Although the terms “evaluation” and “assessment” tend to be used interchangeably by some scholars and differentially by others, it has been the author’s experience that assessment is a less threatening term which more accurately captures the primary purpose of the process: to gather feedback that can be used for professional and programmatic improvement. It is noteworthy that, etymologically, the term “assessment” derives from a root word meaning to “sit beside” and “assist,” whereas “evaluation” derives from the same root as “value”—which connotes appraisal and judgment of worth. (An added bonus for using the term assessment, in lieu of evaluation, is that the former can be combined with “academic advisement” to form the phrase, “assessment of academic advisement”—a triple alliteration with a rhythm-and-rhyming ring to it that should appeal to faculty with literary leanings and poetic sensibilities.)

**10. In addition to, or in lieu of, calculating the average (mean) student rating for individual items on the evaluation instrument, also calculate and report *the percentages of students choosing each rating option.***

This statistic will reveal how student responses were distributed across all response options, thus providing potentially useful information about the degree of consistency (consensus) or variation (disagreement) among student ratings for each item on the instrument.

**11. Report assessment data generated by the advisor-evaluation instrument in a manner that *minimizes defensiveness and promotes improvement.***

One procedure that may effectively reduce personal defensiveness and increase attention to advising improvement would be to collapse data across all advisors, and use the aggregated results or composite as a focal point to steer group discussion toward the issue of how we could improve *our* advisement *program* (rather than focusing on evaluations of individual advisor). The focus on the program, rather than on the individual, serves to depersonalize the process and reduce the defensiveness that often accompanies performance evaluation. When reviewing the results with all advisors, “we” messages should be used to keep the focus on us (the total program/team) rather than “you” messages

(the individual advisor). For instance, special attention could be paid to those particular items that advisors—on average or as a whole—received the least favorable evaluations, and the question may be asked, “What could *we* do to improve student perceptions (satisfaction) with respect to this aspect of *our* advising program?” Thus. The focus is on “our” *collective* strengths and weakness, rather than “your” *individual* strengths and weaknesses.

Advisors should still receive assessment summaries of their own advising, so they are in a position to see how it compares with the norm (average) for all advisors—on each item comprising the instrument. Thus, if an advisor deviates from the norm, it would be obvious to them and, hopefully, these discrepancies will create the cognitive dissonance or “disequilibrium” needed to motivate positive change. To this end, a panel could be organized consisting of advisors who received particularly high ratings and positive comments for specific items (dimensions) of advising assessed by the instrument. These exceptional advisors could share advising strategies that they think may have contributed to the exceptional evaluations they received on that particular dimension of advising. This strategy would enable the college to recognize a variety of advisors for advising excellence in a variety of advising dimensions, and serve to raise consciousness that advising is a multidimensional process, in which excellence may not be global but dimension-specific in nature.

Lastly, the *time and place* where our data debriefing occurs can make a real difference in how people respond to assessment results, and how responsive they are to exploring improvement strategies. For example, assessment data could be shared in the early evening following dinner, which creates the time and the ambience for participants to review data and discuss improvement strategies in a relaxed and reflective manner. Also, if a high-level administrator funds and attends the dinner, a strong message is sent to the college community that advising assessment and improvement are valued endeavors. Top-level administrative support seems is important for any type of professional and program development, and high-ranking administrators should be encouraged to supply support fiscally and visibly (by their physical presence).

### **ACADEMIC ADVISORS’ ASSESSMENT OF THE ADVISING PROGRAM**

Consistent with a focus on assessment for improvement rather than evaluation for judgment, it is recommended that *advisors* be given the opportunity to assess the advising program from their perspective. For example, academic advisors could assess (a) the quality of administrative support they receive for advising, (b) the effectiveness of advisor orientation, training, and development they have received, (c) the usefulness of support materials or technological tools provided for them, (d) viability of the advisee-advisor ratio, and (e) the effectiveness of administrative policies and procedures. (Note: See Appendix B, pp. 18-19, for an instrument that has been designed to assess advisors’ perceptions of the quality of an advisement program and the effectiveness of administrative support for advising.)

Wes Habley, Director of Assessment Programs at American College Testing, notes that, “In many cases, advisors do not (are not encouraged to) share with decision-makers the information which would lead to program, personnel, or policy modifications. This is particularly important in the case of the increasing diversity of entering students, because academic advisors may be the first to recognize how this diversity may influence programs, personnel, and policies” (1995, p 12). Allowing advisors to assess administrative support for advising has the dual advantage of (a) providing feedback to the advising program

director/coordinator that may be used for program improvement (e.g., what advisors feel could be done to better support their quest for quality), and (b) actively involving advisors in the assessment process—sending them the explicit message that their input is valued, and reducing their defensiveness about being evaluated—because they become more than passive recipients or “objects” of evaluation, but also active “agents” in the assessment process.

### **ADVISOR SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Advisors can also become more actively involved in the assessment process if they engage in self-assessment. This could be done in narrative form, perhaps as part of an advising portfolio that would include a personal statement of advising philosophy, advising strategies employed, advisor-development activities, etc. One potentially useful form of self-assessment would be for advisors to respond to their student evaluations. For instance, advisors might give their interpretations or explanations for ratings and comments received from their advisees, their thoughts about why they received high evaluations with respect to certain advising functions, and how they might address or redress areas in which they were perceived least favorably.

One interesting idea suggested in the scholarly literature on instructor evaluations that may be adopted as a form of advisor self-assessment is to have advisors complete the same evaluation instrument as their advisees, responding to it as they think their advisees respond. Consistencies and discrepancies that emerge between how the advisor and students respond to the evaluation instrument could provide advisors with valuable feedback for self-assessment. In particular, mismatches between advisor-advisee perceptions may create cognitive “dissonance” or “disequilibrium” in the minds of advisors that could stimulate productive changes in advising attitudes and behavior.

### **PEER ASSESSMENT OF ADVISING**

Research in the area of faculty development strongly supports the effectiveness of peer feedback and collegial dialogue for promoting change in instructional behavior (Eble & McKeachie, 1985). Thus, it may be reasonable to expect that peer assessment and collegial feedback would work equally well with faculty advisors. Disappointingly, however, national survey research indicates that peer evaluation is the least frequently used method of advisor evaluation (Habley, 1993).

An advisor-evaluation instrument that is designed primarily for student evaluation and advisor self-assessment may also be utilized for *peer* assessment. For instance, teams of advisors could agree to review each other’s evaluations in a collegial fashion—for the mutually supportive purpose of improving their professional performance. Peer assessment could also be conducted in an anonymous or confidential manner, whereby each advisor receives the student evaluations of an anonymous colleague and provides that colleague with constructive feedback; at the same time, the advisor who reviews student evaluations from an anonymous colleague also receives feedback from a colleague. Thus, each advisor receives peer feedback from, and provides feedback to, an advising colleague.

The effectiveness of peer assessment stems in part from the fact that feedback from colleagues is perceived to be less threatening and more credible than feedback delivered by a superior or outside consultant—because it is feedback coming from someone “in the trenches”—someone performing the same duties, facing the same challenges, and working under the same constraints as the person being evaluated. However, despite the documented effectiveness of peer assessment and collegial dialogue for instructional development of faculty, national survey research indicates that peer assessment is the *least*

frequently used method of advisor evaluation (Habley, 1988).

### **ASSESSMENT OF ADVISING BY THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

In addition to student, peer, and self-assessment, the *program director* also has a role to play in the assessment process. Frost (1991) notes that comprehensive evaluation of an advisement program includes feedback from advising administrators, as well as students and individual advisors. It is the program director who is uniquely positioned to review all individual advisor evaluations and see the “big picture,” i.e., advisement as a total program. By detecting recurrent themes across individual advisors or academic department and noting trends that emerge when evaluations are aggregated and viewed as a composite, the director can obtain a panoramic perspective of the program’s overall effectiveness, moving advisor evaluations beyond the narrow scope of *personnel* evaluation and viewing them through the wider lens of *program* evaluation. For instance, the director could identify those items that tend to receive the lowest overall student ratings (aggregated across all advisors) and use these items to prioritize and focus discussion of program-improvement strategies with advisors. As Glennen and Faye (1995) that a college should, “Evaluate its program of advising in addition to evaluating individual advisors. Student evaluations are one source which can be used to do this. Taken together [student evaluations] give an overview of student opinion and of reaction to the advising they receive” (p. 73). This evaluation could be conducted in a collegial, non-threatening fashion by framing advising-improvement questions in terms of what “we” can do collectively, as a team, to improve the effectiveness of “our” program in areas where students perceive it least favorably.

The program director is also well positioned to identify “critical incidents” that could serve as qualitative data for diagnosing weaknesses or problems in the advising program (e.g., common sources or causes of student complaints and grievances, and recurrent reasons given by students for seeking a change of advisors.) Patterns emerging from such incidents may provide critical diagnostic data that can be used to target and focus advising-improvement efforts.

Furthermore, program directors are able of conducting *needs assessment*. To assess the needs of academic advisors, the following question, suggested by White, Goetz, Hunter, & Barefoot (1995), may efficiently and effectively serve this purpose: “What do advisors want to know about students, and how can this information be beneficial in an advising exchange?” (p. 27). Similarly, program directors can students’ advising needs. Upcraft, Srebniak, & Stevenson (1995) argue that, “The first component of a comprehensive academic advising assessment program is the assessment of first-year student advising needs. This type of assessment is important because inadequate academic advising is often a result of offering advising services which do not match student needs” (p. 142).

Lastly, program directors may play an important role in collecting data on how *frequently* and how *many* students use advising services. Such assessment “tracking” may reveal different patterns of program use by different student subpopulations (e.g., underrepresented versus majority students) and by students at different stages of the college experience (e.g., first-year versus second-year students). Such patterns may prove useful for identifying students who are being under-served and who might profit from more “intrusive” advisors or advising practices.

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## Appendix A

**ADVISOR ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT  
(STUDENT SURVEY)**

Please help us to improve the quality of academic advising at our college by completing this survey thoughtfully and honestly. We especially need and value your *written comments* below each item because these comments enable you to justify or explain your rating, and enable us to understand *why* you chose to rate the item as you did. Your written comments also provide advisors with the type of specific feedback they need to make improvements.

Your handwritten comments will be converted to typewritten form and presented to your advisor along with other students' comments, so your comments will remain confidential. Also, the questions about your age, gender, and class standing at the beginning of the survey are not meant to identify you personally; instead, they will be aggregated (combined) across different students and presented to your advisor in summary form—for the purpose of providing your advisor with feedback on how different student subgroups perceive the quality of advising they are receiving.

Thanks in advance for your help. We will read your comments carefully, consider them seriously, and make an earnest attempt to improve the quality of academic advising for all present and future students at our college.

Sincerely,

(signature of program director)  
Director of Academic Advisement

**STUDENT INFORMATION**

**Age:** (1) < 25 (2) 25 or older

**Gender:** (1) male (2) female

**Major:** (1) decided (2) undecided

**Class:** (1) freshman (2) sophomore (3) junior (4) senior

Please use the following scale to rate items: (1) Disagree Strongly (D-ST)  
(2) Disagree Moderately (D-M)  
(3) Disagree Slightly (D-SL)  
(4) Agree Slightly (A-SL)  
(5) Agree Moderately (A-M)  
(6) Agree Strongly (A-ST)

(D-ST)	(D-M)	(D-SL)	(A-SL)	(A-M)	(A-ST)
1	2	3	4	5	6

My **advisor**:

**1. is hard to get in touch with.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**2. gives me as much time as I need when we meet.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**3. encourages me to come by for help.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**4. takes a personal interest in me.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**5. encourages me to express my thoughts and feelings.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**6. is a good listener.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**7. gives me accurate information about course requirements.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**8. helps me understand why required courses are important for my professional development and future plans.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**9. considers my personal abilities, talents, and interests when advising me about courses or programs of study.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**10. has assisted me in developing a long-term education plan.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**11. helps me to connect with campus resources (learning center, counseling services, etc.)**

reason/explanation for rating:

**12. helps me make important educational decisions (selecting elective courses, exploring academic majors/minors, etc.)**

reason/explanation for rating:

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

As an **advisee**, I :

**13. made appointments to see my advisor.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**14. kept appointments I made with my advisor.**

reason/explanation for rating:

**15. was well prepared for my appointments.**

reason/explanation for rating:

## OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What are your advisor's **major strengths** or **best features**?

2. What could your advisor do to **improve** the quality of his/her advising?

3. Would you **recommend** your advisor to other students?

## Appendix B

**ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION  
(ADVISOR SURVEY)**

The Advisement Center is seeking your input on the academic advising process at our college, with the intent of strengthening and improving the program. Individual responses to this survey will be treated confidentially, and only general trends will be shared with the college community.

Please return this survey through campus mail *within three weeks* to the Advisement Center. Thanks for your time and effort; we hope to put the information to good use.

Number of Years You Have Been Advising at Marymount: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students You Presently Advise: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which one of the following best characterizes *your attitude* toward advising?

- \_\_\_\_\_ I find advising pleasant and rewarding.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I have neither very positive nor very negative feelings toward advising.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I find advising unpleasant.

*Reason/rationale* for this response:

2. Which one of the following best captures your perception of *student attitudes* toward the advising process?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Students find the advising process pleasant and rewarding.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Students have neither very positive nor very negative feelings about the advising process.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Students find the advising process unpleasant and frustrating.

*Reason/rationale* for this response:

3. My academic advising experience is *best characterized* by the following (check as many as apply):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Students often do not keep appointments.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Students often do not come with any pre-planned schedule.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I give accurate advice and answers on curricular requirements.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I give accurate advice and answers to student questions relating to their options after graduation.

- I serve as a resource person to my advisees on matters relating to choice of a college major.
- I serve as a resource person to my advisees on matters relating to career choice.
- I help my advisees to resolve their personal problems.
- I refer my advisees to campus support services for assistance on matters that are beyond my expertise.
- I encourage my advisees to become involved in campus life and off-campus community service.

4. Overall, how would you rate the academic advisement system at our college?

- highly effective     moderately effective     slightly effective
- highly ineffective     moderately ineffective     highly ineffective

*Reason/rationale* for this rating:

5. What do you find to be the most **rewarding** aspect of academic advising?

6. What do you find to be the most **frustrating** or **dissatisfying** aspect of academic advising?

7. In what ways might our academic advisement system be **improved**?

8. What type(s) of additional personal or institutional **support** do you think would make the advising process more *effective* and/or *satisfying* for advisors?

Final Comments/Suggestions/Recommendations:

# ATTACHMENT 3

**PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**

1. How many semesters, including this one, have you attended Purdue?    **A=1    B=2    C=3    D=4    E=none of these**
2. How many semesters, including this one, have you attended Purdue?    **A=5    B=6    C=more than 6    D=none of these**
3. Current College/School enrolled in:    **A= Ag    B= CFS    C= EDUC    D= ENGR    E=none of these**
4. Current College/School enrolled in:    **A=LA    B=Mgmt    C=Pharm    D=NRS    E=none of these**
5. Current College/School enrolled in:    **A=HLS    B=Sci    C=Tech    D=USP    E=none of these**
6. Current College/School enrolled in:    **A=VetTech    B=none of these**
7. Are you currently pursuing a major that will lead to a teaching license?    **A=yes    B=No**
8. Sex:    **A= F    B= M**
9. Ethnicity:    **A=African-American    B=American Indian    C=Asian-American    D=Caucasian    E=none of these**
10. Ethnicity:    **A=Hispanic-American    B=Other    C=none of these**
11. Over-all Grade Point Average:    **A=4.0    B=3.5-3.99    C=3.0 – 3.49    D=2.5-2.99    E=none of these**
12. Over-all Grade Point Average:    **A=2.0 2.49    B=1.5-1.99    C=1.49 or less    D=none of these**

**Compared to when I entered Purdue, I have a better understanding of . . . .**

- |  |                          |                 |                     |                    |                            |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 13. my interests                           | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 14. my abilities                           | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 15. my life goals                          | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 16. my career goals                        | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 17. university policies                    | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 18. available courses                      | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 19. academic progress measures             | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 20. campus resources                       | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 21. community resources                    | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 22. degree requirements                    | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 23. majors available at Purdue             | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 24. majors consistent with my career goals | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |

**Academic advising has increased my understanding of . . . .**

- |  |                          |                 |                     |                    |                            |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 25. my interests                           | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 26. my abilities                           | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 27. my life goals                          | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 28. my career goals                        | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 29. university policies                    | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 30. available courses                      | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 31. academic progress measures             | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 32. campus resources                       | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 33. community resources                    | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 34. degree requirements                    | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 35. majors available at Purdue             | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |
| 36. majors consistent with my career goals | <b>A=Strongly Agree,</b> | <b>B=Agree,</b> | <b>C=Undecided,</b> | <b>D=Disagree,</b> | <b>E=Strongly Disagree</b> |