“Inclusive and Welcoming Advisors”

Analyzing the advising experiences of marginalized students
Research Team

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Questions or suggestions? Email advising.ai@umich.edu.
Motivation for this Study

- To understand how undergraduate students on the Ann Arbor campus experience academic advising
- To explore how different student populations experience academic advising differently, particularly those in marginalized groups
- To identify ways to improve existing advising services and to make advising more accessible and inclusive.
Past Studies Have Found...

First generation undecided students are less likely to seeking advising than their peers, perhaps because they do not understand the role of an advisor. - Glaessgen et al (2018)

Transfer students report that advisors are inaccessible and give conflicting information so they tend to self-advice instead.
- Hayes, Lindeman, & Luksz (2020)

Student veterans report that advisors have little understanding of their military experience which leads them to feel more isolated. - Parks, Walker, & Smith (2018)

Students with disabilities are advised differently than their peers, particularly in terms of engagement opportunities. - Zilvinskis, Barber, Brozinsky, & Hochberg (2020)

Students of color report that they are more likely to succeed at predominantly white institutions when advising is humanized, holistic, and proactive.
- Museus & Ravello (2010)

Black students at PWIs feel more supported when advisors recognize the challenges they face and support them with advocacy and affirmations. - Lee (2018)
Timeline

FA19-WN20: Analysis of Existing U-M Data Sources
FA20: Data Collection (Survey)
WN-SU21: Data Analysis
FA21: Report to U-M Advising Community
Survey Design

- Iterative process of writing and revising survey questions, then grouping them into sections
  - Advising outcomes, experiences, logistics, impressions, demographics
- Virtual focus groups with students to refine questions
- IRB Exempt
  - Quality improvement project to improve advising services
Respondents

Surveyed a random sample of 2500 undergraduate students on the Ann Arbor campus in Oct 2020 and received 377 responses.
Barriers to Success

Previous research at U-M has revealed that students who are first-generation college students, come from low-income backgrounds, or are from historically underrepresented populations face additional barriers to success as observed through earning systematically lower grades in some courses.

Given these known systemic issues, we’ve focused on these characteristics to investigate student advising experiences.
We used student birth sex as reported on admission to understand how male and female students experience advising differently.

This should not be interpreted as gender. Students were able to report being either male, female or part of an ‘Other’ category. No survey respondents reported this category.

Female students were significantly more likely to respond to the survey, and are overrepresented in the dataset at a 2:1 ratio.
Only 51 of our survey respondents reported being the first generation in their family to go to college.
Who sees themselves as underrepresented?

Family College Experience
- Low-Income
- Middle-High Income
High-Level Findings

Today we’re focused on the differences in advising as experienced by marginalized populations as compared to non-marginalized - but the survey also has rich feedback for understanding the broad landscape of advising at U-M that we’re investigating! A few examples:

- 25% of students reported that advising was required - while 35% said it was not, and **33% said they didn’t know!**
- 77% of respondents reported seeking advising **at least once a term**
- 4% of respondents reported **experiencing discrimination in an advising context**, including racial (6 reports), sex (5 reports), and age (4 reports)
Students are broadly satisfied with their advising experience

Students broadly report high satisfaction with their advising experiences, with no statistically significant differences by subgroups considered ($m = 4.28$).

5 point scales with 5 being Strongly Agree, 3 being Neutral, and 1 being Strongly Disagree.
I am comfortable contacting an advisor with a question

Students broadly report being comfortable contacting an advisor with a question, with no statistically significant differences by subgroups considered ($m = 4.43$).

5 point scales with 5 being Strongly Agree, 3 being Neutral, and 1 being Strongly Disagree.
I am comfortable in meetings with advisors

Students who identify as URM report lower comfort \((m = 4.36)\) in meetings with advisors than non-URM \((m = 4.57)\)

Transfer students report being more comfortable \((m = 4.75)\) in meetings than their peers \((m = 4.5)\)
Academic advisors care about my personal success

Students report feeling that advisors care about their personal success \( (m = 4.2) \), with no statistically significant differences by subgroups considered.
Academic advisors care about my academic success

Students who identify as URM believe their advisors care less about their academic success ($m = 4.13$) than their counterparts ($m = 4.37$).
I feel that my identities are respected by academic advisors

Female students report feeling more respected by academic advisors \( (m = 4.66) \) than male students do \( (m = 4.44) \).

First-generation students feel less respected \( (m = 4.35) \) than continuing generation students \( (m = 4.63) \).

URM students feel less respected \( (m = 4.34) \) than non-URM students \( (m = 4.65) \).
Academic advisors use inclusive language

Female students perceive their advisors as using inclusive language ($m = 4.63$) more than their male counterparts do ($m = 4.44$)
Academic advisors invite me to talk about my background and campus experiences

URM students rated advisors as less likely to ask about their background and experiences \((m = 3.79)\) than non-URM students \((m = 4.15)\).

Transfer students shared the opposite experience, rating advisors as more likely to ask about their background \((m = 4.53)\) than non-transfer students \((m = 4.03)\).
My needs are generally met when meeting with an academic advisor.

Transfer students are more likely to report that their needs are met during advising meetings ($m = 4.75$) than their non-transfer counterparts do ($m = 4.32$).
Academic advisors have been helpful in navigating academic challenges

First-generation students perceived advisors as more helpful than continuing generation students (3.84 vs. 3.38)

Low-income students perceived advisors as more helpful than middle/high income students (3.79 vs 3.38)
### Implications for Practice: Advisors

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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<td>Set clear expectations</td>
<td>Teach students <em>how</em> to use advising: Is advising required? Which advisor(s) should they see? How far in advance should they schedule an appointment?</td>
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<td>Build relationships</td>
<td>Invite students to talk about their personal lives and campus experiences, not just academics</td>
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<td>Promote career exploration</td>
<td>Increase collaboration between academic and career advisors to help students explore post-college options</td>
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<td>Support academic success</td>
<td>Spend more time helping students learn college-level study skills</td>
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### Implications for Practice: Advising Administrators

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<td>Offer ongoing training</td>
<td>Train new/experienced advisors on DEI topics (e.g., student populations, inclusive language, systemic barriers) and advising approaches (e.g., Appreciative Advising, Motivational Interviewing)</td>
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<td>Assess advising frequently</td>
<td>Collect data to gauge how students are experiencing advising (e.g., satisfaction, inclusion, discrimination)</td>
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<td>Improve accuracy and transparency of advising information</td>
<td>Deliver consistent and accurate information across units; make processes more transparent (e.g., how to switch advisors); explore technology tools to support cross-campus knowledge</td>
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References

- Museus, S. D., & Ravello, J. N. (2010). Characteristics of academic advising that contribute to racial and ethnic minority student success at predominantly white institutions.
THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

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