



# WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

## EXPLORING STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF ADVISORS

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# INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Discussion of what we believe students expect
- ❑ Exploring data from three sources
  - ❑ Small qualitative study
  - ❑ Data from College of Arts and Sciences freshmen orientation sessions
  - ❑ Qualitative data from campus wide surveys
- ❑ Discussion about what we can take from this data to inform our practice



**WHY DOES THIS TOPIC MATTER?**

**DO YOU BELIEVE THAT MOST STUDENTS HAVE:**

**A) REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF ADVISORS?**

**OR**

**B) UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF ADVISORS?**

**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE EXPECTATIONS  
STUDENTS HAVE OF ADVISORS?**

# INCOMING EXPECTATIONS

Based on a small qualitative study:

- ❑ Expectations based on guidance counselors in high school
  - ❑ 9 categorized this experience as good
  - ❑ 12 categorized this experience as neutral
  - ❑ 9 categorized this experience as bad

# INCOMING EXPECTATIONS

Based on a small qualitative study:

- ❑ Similar experiences were viewed differently by students
  - ❑ Jackie: “(advisor) pretty much did everything for us. We just came in, and they would pick out our classes.”
  - ❑ Karl: “I had a really horrible advisor in high school. They did not take the students’ opinions or request into account.”

From Ellis, K.C. (2014) Academic Advising Experiences of First-Year Undecided Students: A Qualitative Study. *NACADA Journal* 34 (2), 42-49

# INCOMING EXPECTATIONS

Based on a small qualitative study:

- ❑ Students expected to receive help with choosing classes
- ❑ Some students expected discussions about major choices
- ❑ Some students expected advisors to show a personal interest and to make them feel comfortable
- ❑ Carla: “I wondered if my advisor would go into detail about what the classes are about and just make me feel more comfortable.”
- ❑ Monique: “I expected my advisor to ease my stress, just show me that they care about me and how I am doing as a person.”

From Ellis, K.C. (2014) Academic Advising Experiences of First-Year Undecided Students: A Qualitative Study. *NACADA Journal* 34 (2), 42-49



# TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS STUDY

- ❑ Expectations based on previous experience
- ❑ Conflicting expectations
- ❑ Relational expectations

# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

YES OR NO:

- ☐ My advisor should make my schedule every semester.
- ☐ My advisor should give me a specific list of all classes to take each semester.
- ☐ If I go into the advising office in 275 Park Hall, I should be able to meet with my advisor that same day.
- ☐ If I have an important question for my advisor, I expect them to be able to answer it the same day.
- ☐ My advisor should be able to explain policies regarding the classes I am taking.
- ☐ My advisor should help me find the requirements to graduate.
- ☐ My advisor should encourage me to pursue interests.

# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

☐ My advisor should make my schedule every semester.

YES 10% (58)    **NO 90% (528)**

# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

- ☐ My advisor should give me a specific list of all classes to take each semester.

YES 49% (313) **NO 51% (331)**

# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

- ☐ If I go into the advising office in 275 Park Hall, I should be able to meet with my advisor that same day.

YES 12% (80)    **NO 88% (567)**

# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

- ☐ If I have an important question for my advisor, I expect them to be able to answer it the same day.

YES 25% (164) **NO 75% (480)**

# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

- ☐ My advisor should be able to explain policies regarding the classes I am taking.

**YES 70% (446) NO 30% (187)**

# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

☐ My advisor should help me find the requirements to graduate.

**YES 96% (600) NO 4% (28)**



# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

☐ My advisor should encourage me to pursue interests.

**YES 91% (568) NO 9% (53)**

# CAS FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

	YES	NO
My advisor should make my schedule every semester.	10% (58)	90% (528)
My advisor should give me a specific list of all classes to take each semester.	49% (313)	51% (331)
If I go into the advising office in 275 Park Hall, I should be able to meet with my advisor that same day.	12% (80)	88% (567)
If I have an important question for my advisor, I expect them to be able to answer it the same day.	25% (164)	75% (480)
My advisor should be able to explain policies regarding the classes I am taking.	70% (446)	30% (187)
My advisor should help me find the requirements to graduate.	96% (600)	4% (28)
My advisor should encourage me to pursue interests.	91% (568)	9% (53)

# TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS DATA

- ❑ Most students have realistic expectations
  - ❑ Sometimes we get bogged down by those squeaky wheels
- ❑ Conflicting expectations

# CAMPUS WIDE ADVISING SURVEYS

- ❑ Go out every January
- ❑ 3 years of data from people that attended fall advisement
- ❑ 1 year of data from people that did not attend advisement in the fall
- ❑ Focuses on learning outcomes, but one open ended opportunity for comments:  
“Additional comments about your advising experience”

# CAMPUS WIDE ADVISING SURVEYS

## Themes

- ☐ Advisor disposition
- ☐ Advisor assignments
- ☐ Inconsistent advising experiences
- ☐ Advisor availability/accessibility
- ☐ Accuracy of advisement

# THEME: ADVISOR DISPOSITION

- ☐ Over half of the respondents offered **positive** feedback indicating their advisor was:

- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Easy to talk to/approachable
- ☐ Kind/caring
- ☐ Dedicated
- ☐ Diligent
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Competent/knowledgeable
- ☐ Prepared/organized
- ☐ Supportive/offered guidance
- ☐ Effective with academic planning

*"Each advisor I have met with has been very helpful and knowledgeable. It has been nice to know that whenever I'm going to meet with them, I'll come out of the meeting in better shape than I was before."*

- ☐ A little less than half of the respondents provided **negative** feedback indicating their advisor was:

- ☐ Not helpful
- ☐ Not welcoming
- ☐ Mean/rude
- ☐ Not caring/dismissive
- ☐ Discouraging
- ☐ Inpatient
- ☐ Rushed
- ☐ Unprepared/unorganized
- ☐ Not supportive
- ☐ Unknowledgeable

*"I was pointed to a URL and sent away. I was left to do everything on my own."*

# THEME: ADVISOR ASSIGNMENTS

- ❑ Students recommended to be assigned **one** advisor:
  - ❑ Advisor would have prior knowledge of the student/eliminate being uninformed when advisors switch
  - ❑ To make personal relationships
  - ❑ For consistency
  - ❑ To lead to greater academic success
  - ❑ To eliminate not knowing who advisor is
  - ❑ Having more than one advisor causes confusion – getting different recommendations of information is confusing

*“Assigned my fifth advisor in four years.”*

*“Not a fan of ‘come in and get the first person who’s available’ approach. Would appreciate an alphabetical order where I’m certain to get the same advisor based on last name.”*

# THEME: INCONSISTENT ADVISING EXPERIENCES

- ❑ Students reported inconsistencies among new and experienced advisors:
  - ❑ Previous advisor helpful - current advisor not
  - ❑ Faculty advisor more knowledgeable than general advisor
  - ❑ Advisor quality was variable – some competent, some not
  - ❑ New advisors could not answer details and needed more training
  - ❑ Communication between advisors needs to improve – received varied explanations

*“Been a roller coaster. First advisor misadvised me so I immediately changed my advisor and the one I have now is great.”*



# THEME: ADVISORS AVAILABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY

- ❑ Students reported some discrepancies contacting advisors:
  - ❑ Advising appointments not on time
  - ❑ Advisors difficult to reach during registration time – end up meeting after registration
  - ❑ Request to make appointments online in addition to calling to schedule
  - ❑ Hard to schedule appointment with advisor/sometimes took weeks to hear back
  - ❑ Advising overstretched/advisors feel rushed
  - ❑ Wanted more one-on-one time with advisor/not able to meet with advisor in person
  - ❑ Difficult to get in for a quick question – met with resistance when stopping in

*“My advisor always responds back with answers.”*

*“When my advisor doesn’t know the answer, she finds out and gets back to me.”*

*“There were times when my emails went unanswered, leaving me to figure out crucial items on my own with little to no reassurance.”*

*“The advising process is very helpful however the waiting period is quite long after scheduling an appointment. One to two weeks depending on the amount of people that need assistance.”*

# THEME: ACCURACY OF ADVISEMENT

- ❑ While not universal, some students reported that advisors:
  - ❑ Need to do a better job informing students on General Education, requirements for majors, double majors, requirements to graduate, study abroad, internships, career goals, gap year
  - ❑ Gave wrong date for application to major – unable to apply for major until next semester
  - ❑ Need to provide clear cut answers
  - ❑ Lost scholarship/aid due to misadvising
  - ❑ Need to be better informed on individual classes/specific information about departments
  - ❑ Not helpful in making an easier transition - from high school, from transfer institution, from international institution, as a commuter

*“Great job explaining plan for next 4 years.”*

*“Helped me streamline General Education to coincide with my major.”*

*“They need to be more educated in all areas.”*

*“Generic and not overly helpful.”*

# CAMPUS WIDE TAKEAWAYS FROM DATA

- ☐ **Explore strategies to ensure advisors are using best practices and have up-to-date information on policies, procedures and programs**
  - ☐ Regularly reinforce job knowledge with new and experienced advisors
  - ☐ Provide occasional mandatory training, refresher sessions (such as online refresher “courses”) and appointment observations
  - ☐ Advising Administrators need to work with professional development organizations on campus to identify strategies to ensure quality advisement
- ☐ **Evaluate ways students transition to different advisors**
  - ☐ Create consistency – exercise practices and procedures that align
  - ☐ Eliminate multiple exchanges
  - ☐ Inform students (and parents) of expectations when transitioning from one unit to the next
- ☐ **Continue to look at advisor caseloads**
  - ☐ Strive to eliminate long wait times to see/get an appointment with an advisor
  - ☐ Inform students (and parents) of realistic expectations to receive timely responses
  - ☐ Attempt to eradicate students and advisors “feeling rushed” due to volume - explore creative ways to get information to students in contexts outside of advisement appointments

# NSSE DATA: QUALITY OF YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH ACADEMIC ADVISORS

## Freshmen

	Poor end of scale (1-3)	Good end of scale (5-7)
2014	16.2% (185)	63.8% (732)
2017	19.5% (261)	59.0% (787)

## Seniors

	Poor end of scale (1-3)	Good end of scale (5-7)
2014	24.6% (425)	56.0% (966)
2017	26.1% (406)	54.5% (819)

# EXTRAPOLATED EXPECTATIONS FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES

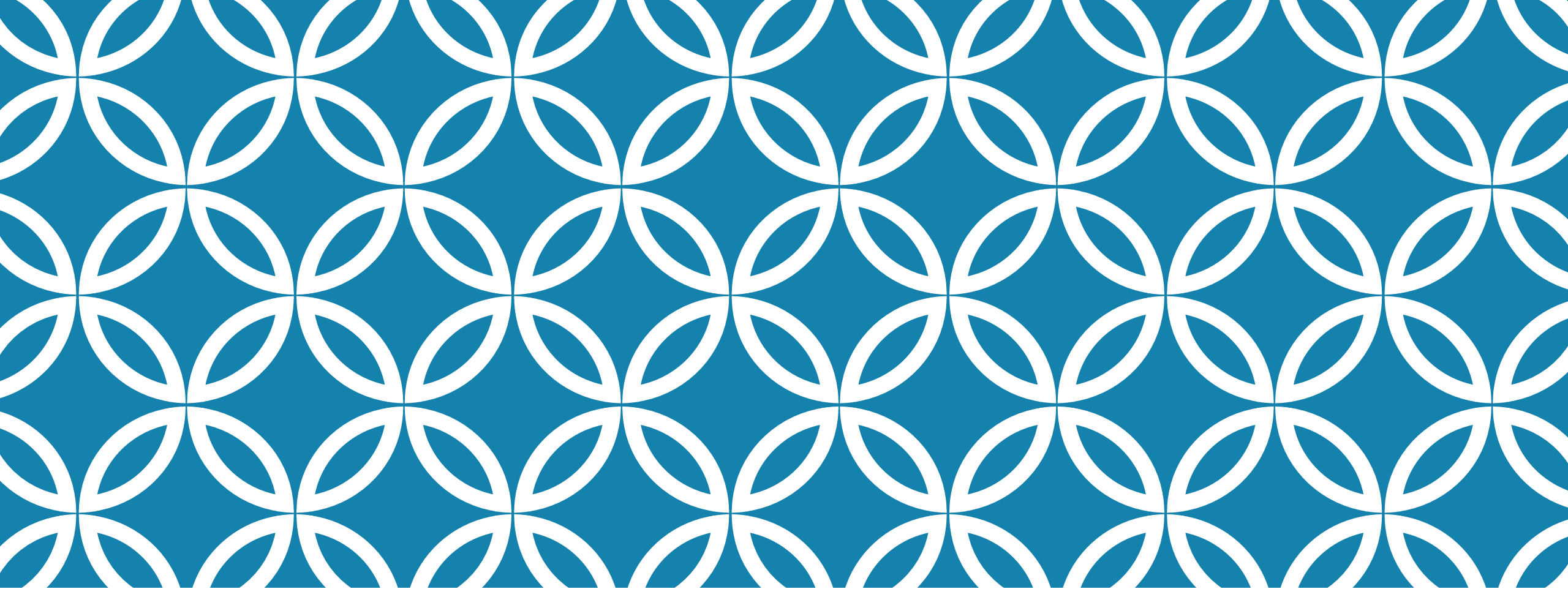
- ☐ Some role in determining what classes to take (level varies)
- ☐ Knowledgeable about policies/procedures/requirements
- ☐ Discussions about majors, careers and goals
- ☐ Positive, ongoing relationship throughout undergraduate career
- ☐ Timely communication
- ☐ Accessible and can meet with students within a reasonable wait time

# WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN FOR US?

- ☐ Are there reasonable expectations we may not be meeting? Is there anything we can do about that?
- ☐ How can we curb unreasonable expectations?
- ☐ How can we learn more about what students expect of advisors?

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- ☐ Talk with students about their expectations
- ☐ Ask them what they are looking for
- ☐ Communicate what is reasonable (orientation, websites, initial meetings)
- ☐ Examine gaps between expectations and advising structures
- ☐ Examine your “service” skills
  - ☐ Take stock of your stress levels, moods, etc.
  - ☐ Work to provide consistent experiences
- ☐ Exercise your professional muscles (regularly checking your knowledge)
- ☐ Professional development



# THANK YOU!

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