

FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FACULTY ADVISING SURVEY

Unlike the pilot testing of the students' advisement survey, the questionnaire and methods utilized to survey KSU faculty and staff advisors worked reasonably well. Although the overall response rate to the survey of advisors was not strong (about 25%) or well representative of all colleges, the data generated from the survey appeared sufficiently sound to warrant basic descriptive statistical analysis and cautious interpretation of the results. However, the clustering of questionnaire items into scale scores and the use of correlational or inferential statistical analysis did not appear to be warranted under the circumstances.

Respondent Demographics

- A little more than one-fourth of the faculty and staff advisors who could have participated in this advising survey did so (114 usable responses from active advisors were submitted). Roughly three-fourths of the faculty were not heard from on this topic, and their opinions could be substantively different from those who responded. This is especially true in light of the fact that the colleges with advisement centers and some of the largest advisement programs were underrepresented in the sample of respondents.
- The representation of women in the sample of respondents to this survey was slightly greater than the representation of women in the faculty as a whole (59% vs. 51%). Nevertheless, a substantial gender-related bias in the survey results is not likely.
- The representation of faculty respondents by academic rank appears to be reasonably close to the representation of the different ranks in the faculty as a whole. Thus, an experience-related bias in the sample does not appear likely.
- The racial breakdown of the survey respondents appears to be reasonably close to the racial breakdown for the faculty as a whole. Again, the likelihood of a bias in sample responses due to race is low.
- It should be noted, however, that the sample of respondents was not proportionally representative of the faculty as a whole in terms of their home departments and colleges. It is likely that survey results are biased in favor of the attitudes of the faculty in the College of Science & Mathematics. Nearly half of the faculty in that college responded to the survey compared to less than a fifth of the faculty in each of the other colleges. Overall, a third of all survey respondents were from the College of Science and Mathematics. At the other extreme, only 7% of the respondents were from the Coles College of Business and only 10% of the full-time faculty in that college responded. The opinions of faculty from colleges that rely heavily on

advisement centers (e.g., business, education, and humanities & social sciences) appear to be underrepresented in the survey results.

- The average number (median) of students advised by respondents this semester was 25 and the average number of minutes spent with each student was reported to be 30 minutes. This suggests that the survey responses tend to represent the opinions of faculty with modest and manageable advisement loads and may not be representative of the faculty and staff advisors who see hundreds of students per semester.
- The care taken by many respondents to provide substantive and occasionally passionate comments in the open-ended items suggests one other possible bias in the respondent sample which may be positive and constructive. While the rate of faculty response to the survey may be lower than desired, this sample of survey responses may represent the opinions of faculty and staff who take advising seriously, have a genuine interest in the improvement of advisement, and have established strong advising relationships with students. Those opinions may need to be given special weight and consideration.

Advisement for Registration & Scheduling of Classes

According to the majority of faculty respondents to this survey, advisement sessions are not primarily focused on registration issues or class scheduling concerns. (This finding is somewhat inconsistent with KSU's Web page on "Student Advising" which encourages students to use academic advisement for registration assistance.) The supporting evidence for this finding is as follows:

Item #6. My advising sessions primarily consist of scheduling classes. 71% disagreed with this statement, and only 18% agreed.

Item #4. Students only seek my input when they are dropping and/or adding classes. 85% disagreed with this statement, and only 6% agreed.

Advisement About Program Requirements and Majors

According to the majority of faculty respondents to this survey, students generally understand their program requirements and generally select their majors in a timely manner. However, the minority opinion of the faculty respondents on these issues is substantial in size. This divided opinion was also reflected in the open-ended comments where a number of strongly held and opposing views appeared on the issue of when a student should declare a major. The supporting evidence for this finding is a follows:

Item #2. Students have a basic understanding of their degree requirements. 55% agreed with this statement, 17% were neutral, and 27% disagreed.

Item #5. Students generally declare their majors in sufficient time to complete upper division courses. 49% agreed with this statement, 18% were neutral, and 29% disagreed.

Item #20. I believe students should declare their majors during their sophomore year. 45% agreed with this statement, 21% were neutral, and 30% disagreed.

(See also the list of open-ended responses.)

Advisement for Relationship Building and Mentoring

According to the majority of faculty respondents to this survey, advisement sessions are primarily focused on building relationships with students and mentoring them in regard to their interests and goals. The supporting evidence for this finding is as follows:

Item #8. I often spend my advising time mentoring students. 79% agreed with this statement, and only 6% disagreed (none strongly disagreed).

Item #7. I take time to clarify and understand students' personal, professional, and academic goals. 95% agreed with this statement, and only 1% disagreed (none strongly disagreed).

Item #9. I believe advising should be used to help students gain employment or gain admission to graduate school. 62% agreed with this statement, and only 11% disagreed.

Item #10. Students generally do not follow my advice. 86% disagreed with this statement, and only 2% agreed (none strongly agreed).

Item #3. My students are motivated and come to me with specific questions or concerns. 81% agreed with this statement, and only 4% disagreed (none strong disagreed).

Item #17. I am comfortable with advising diverse students. 95% agreed with this statement, and nobody disagreed.

Advising as a Valued Activity

According to the majority of faculty respondents to this survey, faculty believe that their colleagues and the university value advising and consider advising in reviews of faculty performance. At the same time, the survey respondents perceive the importance of advising relative to teaching, research, grantsmanship, and service to be low. The supporting evidence for this finding is as follows:

Item #16. My colleagues appreciate the values of advising. 75% agreed with this statement, and only 11% disagreed.

Item #11. My advising responsibilities are considered by my department chair/dean when evaluating my annual performance. 54% agreed with this statement and only 18% disagreed.

Item #14. My department chair/dean recognizes the importance of advising and provides more time and resources for effective advisement. 41% agreed with this statement, and 25% disagreed.

Item #12. My advising responsibilities are considered by my department chair/dean when evaluating my performance toward tenure and performance [promotion?]. 40% agreed with this statement and only 18% disagreed.

Item #15. My department assesses advising effectiveness. 43% agreed with this statement, and 30% disagreed.

Item #29. The average ranking of the importance (#1 being highest) of the following activities for tenure and promotion was:

- #1 Teaching
- #2 Research
- #3 Obtaining Grants
- #4 Performing Service
- #5 Advising

Satisfaction with Advising

According to the majority of faculty respondents to this survey, the faculty are satisfied with advising at KSU. The faculty appear to be more familiar with their department's advising than the advising programs at the CAPS and university levels. The supporting evidence for this finding is as follows:

Item #21. Overall, I am frustrated with my advising sessions. 86% disagreed with this statement, and only 3% agreed (none strongly disagreed).

Item #22. I am satisfied with the advising done in my department. 68% agreed with this statement, and only 15% disagreed.

Item #23. I am pleased with the advising help I get from the CAPS Center at KSU. 38% agreed with this statement, 45% were neutral, and only 14% disagreed).

Item #24. I am pleased with the advising programs we have at KSU. 32% agreed with this statement, 45% were neutral, and 19% disagreed.

Item #13. There is an adverse impact on my other teaching/research activities due to student advising. 48% disagreed with this statement, and 22% agreed.

Required Advising

According to a little more than half of the faculty respondents to this survey, advising should be required rather than elective. However, almost another half of the respondents are either not sure or disagree with requiring advising. In addition, the type of advising that should be required is not clear. Since there was almost uniform agreement that advisement for relationship building and mentoring is the principal focus of advising sessions, one could conclude that this is the type of advising experience that the majority of faculty believe should be required (instead of requiring advisement for registration). The supporting evidence for this finding is as follows:

Item #19. I believe advising should be mandatory. 54% agreed with this statement, 21% were neutral, and 24% disagreed.

Communication with Advising Council Representatives

According to the majority of the faculty respondents to this survey, few faculty communicate with their representative on the Advising Council. Several of the open-ended responses suggest that there is a lack of awareness about the Council's existence, its membership or its functions. The supporting evidence for this finding is as follows:

Item #18. I provide feedback to my Advising Council representative. 60% disagreed with this statement, 30% were neutral, and only 15% agreed.

(See also the list of open-ended responses.)

Use of Email & the Web for Advising

According to the majority of faculty respondents to this survey, advising is generally not done via email or using the Web. However, a sizeable number of respondents indicated that they sometimes conduct their advising via email. The supporting evidence for this finding is as follows:

Item #25. I conduct most of my advising via email. 58% said "no," but 41% said either "sometimes" (39%) or "yes" (2%).

Item #26. I conduct most of my advising over the Web. 90% said "no" and only 6% said "sometimes" or "yes."

Miscellaneous

Item #1, My students are well prepared when they come to their advising sessions, was dropped from this analysis because the item appeared to be not working well. The responses to item #1 were fairly evenly distributed across the agree, neutral, and disagree options, and that pattern of response appeared to be inconsistent with other findings where students were characterized as focused (e.g. #4) and making good use of advising sessions. Perhaps the item was too ambiguous; after all, what is it that students are expected to be prepared to do in their advising sessions?