

Public Abstract

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Title: Academic Advising in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources: An Investigation of Undergraduate Students' Needs and Faculty Performance

Research touts the importance of academic advising with regard to student satisfaction and retention. A key to quality academic advising is assessing and meeting the needs of students. The current literature is inconclusive with regard to the style of advising that works best, what students need/expect, and what advisors/administrators think about advising. The purpose of this study was three-fold: 1) assess the importance of academic advising characteristics as perceived by undergraduate students in the College, 2) examine faculty performance, as perceived by advisees, with regard to the academic advising characteristics, and 3) identify factors that influence students academic advising needs and satisfaction.

The Faculty Advising Instrument and Insight Inventory[®] were distributed via email to all students enrolled in the College ($N = 1619$). A total of 726 students (44.84%) completed the instrument. Overall, students reported a high level of satisfaction with faculty advisors' performance. Results indicated that students' academic advising needs and their evaluation of faculty performance vary little based on sex, academic level and undergraduate degree program. Using the Borich needs assessment model, ten items were identified for potential enhancement. The three items with largest mean weighted discrepancy scores related to identifying employment opportunities after college, providing information about financial assistance and being aware of academic progress. The Insight Inventory[®] indicated that the largest proportion of students were slightly indirect, very outgoing, very steady, and moderate when dealing with details. No relationships were found between students' personality/communication profiles and academic advising needs.