2020 Academic Advising Survey Results

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2020 ACADEMIC ADVISING SURVEY RESULTS
BACKGROUND
NSO creates interactions with more than 1,500 individuals per day, including incoming students, their families, WVU staff members and student workers. This year it was held virtually. The decision to develop a virtual experience was made due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

All first-time freshmen, except international students, were required to complete the Virtual NSO online program in order to schedule a meeting with an adviser to complete their fall course schedule. This report provides insight into the academic scheduling portion of the event.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
An online survey was emailed the end of June to approximately 4,000 freshmen students. The survey elicited approximately 400 responses. Nearly one-third of the surveys were completed by students in the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences (see appendix).
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The Virtual Academic Advising session went exceptionally well, albeit some students experienced technical issues. Overall, satisfaction was higher than in prior years because most students reported that their adviser acted more like a partner this year in helping them finalize their schedule. In terms of overall communication, the vast majority of students had a good understanding of and were satisfied with their block schedule, as well as how it was explained throughout the advising process.

By the end of the session, the vast majority of students understood how their freshman classes contribute to their overall degree and they learned the consequences of adding/dropping classes. Fewer, but still the majority, also learned how the latter could potentially put their financial aid in jeopardy.

Both the pre-advising with Orientation Leaders and advising sessions were very well-received, earning high scores. Students raved that their adviser took the time to talk in-depth with them about their schedule, as well as explained how the classes in their block schedule and the additional suggested classes would work toward graduation. In some cases, advisers also provided encouragement. Others went out of their way to ensure that their students were pleased with their schedule.

A minority of students who struggled with the scheduling process experienced a number of issues, including: advisers not having the student’s transcript, being unable to follow along with the adviser because he/she did not share their screen, not having a clear understanding of the student portal, feeling rushed, not having an adviser in their major, and being unable to schedule some classes because they were not available.
DETAILED FINDINGS
All but 7% of freshmen recall receiving a block schedule. About seven in ten (71%) were extremely or very satisfied with that schedule; another 25% were somewhat satisfied. Just 4% were dissatisfied to some extent.

Q. You may have received a block schedule that shows you are enrolled in the core classes required for your major. Did you receive such a schedule? How satisfied were you with your block schedule?

Q. Were you satisfied with the way your block schedule was explained to you throughout the advising process?
Nearly every student (99%) said their Orientation Leader was knowledgeable about WVU, and all but 5% found their Orientation Leader helpful in preparing them for their advising appointment. Most (77%) thought their Orientation Leader was also knowledgeable about their major.

Thoughts on Orientation Leader

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable about WVU</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful in preparing you for your advising appointment</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable about WVU</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q. Thinking specifically about your professional advising appointment, how would you rate your interaction with your adviser?

About six in ten (63%) rated their adviser as excellent; 25% said they were very good. One in ten (10%) indicated they had a good adviser. Just 3% were disappointed in their adviser to some extent.
Nearly two in ten (19%) students reported having some type of issue during their advising appointment.

Q. Typically, academic advising is done in-person. Did you experience any issues with advising being done virtually or by phone?
The majority of those who had problems during advising complained about technical issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>Technical (41 mentions)</th>
<th>Communications (9 mentions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My internet was unable to access DegreeWorks since it was not private, so I had to access the website on my phone, which made the experience more challenging. My webcam was also not working, so that posed an inconvenience.</td>
<td>“Having both ends try to find the same page for the schedule and adjust the schedule was very difficult because of the communication over the phone opposed to just showing in person.”</td>
<td>“Logging in and generally requesting information. She had to log in under my info just to access registration.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It sometimes cut out and I couldn’t hear what they were saying.</td>
<td>“The meeting was conducted by phone instead of video chat due to problems with the platform being used.”</td>
<td>“It was confusing that the meeting invite was a google meet link but the actual meeting was held through zoom. I missed my initial appointment (granted, it was my fault that I didn’t read carefully) because I went to a google meet room and not zoom.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The meeting was conducted by phone instead of video chat due to problems with the platform being used.</td>
<td>For my pre-advising appointment the google meets didn’t allow me to see my orientation leader and I kept cutting in and out so we had to transfer to a phone call.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All but 2% would recommend their adviser to other students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree/disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Completely disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was able to answer all of my questions</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was knowledgeable about academic and graduation requirements</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listened and respected me as an individual</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave me the time I needed and did not rush me</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was prepared for their advising session with me</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. My academic adviser...
All but 3% feel they’ve made progress toward clarifying or confirming a major and career path. All but 4% and 9% understand how their fall schedule fits into their plan of study for their major and how adding/dropping classes can impact their path to graduation, respectively. Nearly eight in ten (76%) understand how adding/dropping classes can impact their financial aid eligibility.
Adviser was able to answer questions

“During both the meeting with my Orientation Leader and my professional advising meeting, the people I met with were very kind and extremely helpful in answering all of my questions about the requirements needed to graduate and about my next steps to take. Their explanations were thorough and informative, which helped me grasp an understanding of what I need to do next during this college process.”

“Everything was explained to me very thoroughly and made me feel a lot more comfortable with all my classes and the process that I had to go to sign up for them.”

“I am now able to understand my schedule and the requirements I need to complete in the next four years in order to graduate.”

I had absolutely no idea how many credits and classes I was supposed to have, and my academic adviser helped me so much and explained everything I needed to know. Also, I was able to ask any questions regarding campus, and she knew all the answers! When I can talk to her in person once the academic year starts, I feel all my excess questions will be more easily understood! :)

“My adviser was able to explain to me the classes which would benefit me the most during my first year of college. He also took time to take my questions into consideration and formulated responses which were extremely helpful.”

Q. What did you find most beneficial about your academic advising experience?
• **Adviser provided thorough explanations**

  “I had many Dual Enrollment and AP credits that needed to be transferred in before I could schedule, but my adviser helped me to get a better idea of what my schedule could potentially look like.”

  “That even though my academic adviser may have multiple students to help she was able to make sure that during our time it was just the two of us. Completely helping me to her full extent and ensuring that I understood each topic we were talking about.”

  “The academic advising experience helped me choose a minor that would best suit my career goals. My adviser outlined all of the possible routes that my major could take me and was extremely supportive.”

  “The academic adviser I met with was excellent in explaining any questions I had and the overall process of looking through courses. I now find it easier to navigate STAR and I better understand the course selection process.”

• **Adviser provided overall advice/encouragement**

  “I felt like I was put on a good path to earn my credits. I was given lots of good advice for how to have the best time at WVU.”

  “They were very nice and we were able to make jokes with each other and they made the thought of leaving home not so scary.”

  “Being told that what I want to achieve is possible and getting the schedule I need.”

Q. What did you find most beneficial about your academic advising experience?
Adviser laid out a plan

“They helped me do the classes they thought would help me do well with grades and my schedule.”

“My adviser was able to explain to me the classes which would benefit me the most during my first year of college. He also took time to take my questions into consideration and formulated responses which were extremely helpful.”

“We laid out the plan for my engineering path, as well as discussing options for when I settled on a major at the end of the first year.”

Adviser was knowledgeable, good communicator, helpful, patient

“My adviser knew what he was talking about, and was able to explain everything to me in a good manner.”

“She helped me understand my schedule because I really was confused about it. Also she helped introduce me how to get into undergraduate research.”

“My adviser was very kind and helpful and definitely knew what he was doing.”

“My adviser was very easy to talk to and it felt like she really valued my opinion as opposed to just rushing me through the process.”

Q. What did you find most beneficial about your academic advising experience?
Twenty percent acknowledged they still had questions about their fall schedule. When asked how their academic session could be improved upon, aside from suggested that advising be done in person, students suggested the following:

- **Improve Communication** (25 mentions)
  
  “Explain the process more in detail, not being able to be in person was very hard cause not a lot of clarification happened when it came to picking my schedule cause I still barley know how to use all the STAR stuff and so on.”

  “I would say that directions should be given to students on how to work Google Meet. I had difficulties finding my way into the meeting, even with the direct link.”

  “In the pre-advising meeting the Orientation Leader could have spoken slower and more understandably and could have explained the student portal better and it would have been helpful to have found out more about it than I did.”

  “My adviser didn’t have my transcripts yet which I was unaware of, so I wish I would have known so I could’ve scheduled an appointment when she had them.”

  “Have the adviser meet with the student to find out if they have any desires for the schedule before having the adviser make their own changes.”

  “Having the adviser show the student what they are looking at so that the student can follow the conversation better.”

  “Make sure dual enrollment college transcripts have been received and show all courses a student has taken thus far.”
• **Allocate more time** (15 mentions)

“I understand time is a factor but I feel making them longer and allowing students to get all of their questions fully answered without feeling rushed would be more beneficial.”

“I think the time slots should be larger than 30 minutes. If my adviser had an appointment after mine I would not have gotten to finish my schedule.”

• **Provide more information on classes** (12 mentions)

“When you’re looking at the classes online, the majority of the classes aren’t offered to students. So maybe a separate site that shows exclusively what classes are being offered that semester would be great.”

“I spent a lot of time picking my top 4 classes to meet each GE requirement before meeting with my adviser, but the majority of those were already full. It would've been nice for the pre-adviser to share which classes were still available the day before so that the time could be more productive. Lastly, I was disappointed that my WVU regional recruiter had told me a Math 154 class at NVCC would meet my Math requirement at WVU (121). My adviser told me that it won't -- it will count as an elective only.

• **Be knowledgeable about majors** (10 mentions)

“.... I am very unhappy with the block schedule I was given and how that was explained to me. Also not having an adviser yet in the Statler College caused several miscommunications and made the process more difficult.”

“The music industry adviser was not helpful at all, I feel as though if I had a different adviser I would have had a better experience and be on a better path for my majors.”

“Having a pre advising meeting with someone who is in a major you are interested.”

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Q. What are your suggestions for improving the academic advising session?
• **Provide FAQs (3 mentions)**

“Maybe provide a list of most common asked questions to give new students a few ideas of what to ask about because I know I remembered things that would have been useful to ask AFTER my appointment.”

“Having a page where students studying the same major can ask questions. Allowing other students to look at the responses or to ask their own questions.”

“Provide a bulleted list of sorts, to provide examples of discussion/established topics to gain as much necessary info as possible.”

Q. What are your suggestions for improving the academic advising session?
APPENDIX
Q. In which college/school/program is your major located?