

ACADEMIC ADVISING SURVEY
Academic Advising Practices in Undergraduate Departments
RESULTS AND SUMMARY

How do undergraduate students receive Academic Advising, and from whom? What practices are used to advise majors in Santa Clara's undergraduate departments? An advising survey was developed in 2008 by an Advising Assessment Task Force. The purpose of the survey was to determine what kind of advising models are in place. What are the similarities and differences from program to program? Are the programs assessing their practices to determine the effectiveness of their advising model? In early August, 2008 the Academic Advising Assessment Survey for undergraduate majors was sent out by Diane Jonte-Pace to the academic deans in the College of Arts & Sciences, the School of Business and the School of Engineering. The School of Engineering and the School of Business sent back a summary that incorporated all of their majors. Both Schools however invited their department chairs to add any additional comments or information particular to their major. Mechanical engineering, accounting, economics, finance, management, and marketing supplemented the response sent in by their school. The dean of the College of Arts & Sciences sent out a request to all departments and programs with undergraduate majors to complete the survey for their major program. The request went to 25 departments and programs. Responses were received from 24 of 25 departments/programs. One program did not respond. It currently does not have an approved major. The following is based on the information from the completed surveys.

Executive Summary:

Most assignment of advisees is done through collaboration between the chair or director of the major, the administrative assistant in the department or program and the operations manager in the Drahmman Center. In most cases the faculty member's current advisee load is one of the main criteria for the assignment along with any specified interest or request from the student. The exception to this method is in the School of Business. The Assistant Director of Academic Services for Undergraduate Business assigns faculty advisors and peer advisors to the incoming freshmen. All undeclared business transfer students are assigned to the faculty director of undergraduate business. As students declare a major in the School of Business, department administrative assistants assign them advisors.

In terms of who does the actual advising, the School of Engineering and most of the College of Arts & Sciences closely follow the developmental advising model specified in the University's 1992 Undergraduate Academic Advising Plan.¹ The School of Engineering

¹ The University's Developmental Advising Plan assumes a collaborative approach between advisors (primarily faculty) and students. It involves a structured and monitored system that helps students advance toward their goals in concrete and measurable ways. Advising, according to the Plan, helps students formulate and articulate a sense of what they hope to achieve in their studies, and assists them in setting goals and objectives. Developmental advising is consistent with the University's emphasis on educating the whole person.

reports that all of their advising is done one-to-one between faculty advisors and their assigned advisees. Thirteen departments/programs in the College of Arts & Sciences report that all of their advising is done by faculty one-on-one with their assigned advisees. The other departments in the College report a mixture of faculty advising and staff advising with the largest percent being done by the faculty one-on-one or in groups. An exception to this is the psychology department which reports over half of their advising is done by a staff advisor. Three of the largest majors in the College (political science, psychology, communication) find this model very hard to follow. The faculty members in each of these departments have an advising load that is much larger than other departments in the College. The College has tried to ease this load by allowing each of these departments to hire a staff person whose role is to support advising in the department. As a result in those departments staff members take on a larger percent of the advising responsibilities. The Combined Sciences major is an integrated program whose offerings are spread throughout the College of Arts & Sciences. All students majoring in combined sciences are currently assigned to the director of the program for advising purposes. Departments with large numbers of majors, and therefore large advising loads, are not able to advise undeclared students. So undeclared advising is not evenly spread throughout the College.

The School of Business has also found the developmental model a bad fit for their programs. Unlike the other school and college, the School of Business does not allow students to come into the School with a declared major. Instead business students have a more prescriptive set of courses in the first two years of their program for the Business Core that gives them exposure to a variety of areas within the School and requires less consultation and discussion with a faculty advisor to maneuver until the student declares a major. As a result business students do not have the same advising needs as students in the other school or college. To address this, the School of Business set up a pilot program this past year that delineates slightly from the developmental model used in the other school and college. The School assigns groups of students to a first year faculty advisor who oversees a group of peer advisors. Students can meet with either the faculty advisor or one of the peer advisors to discuss program plans. Students stay with this faculty advisor and peer advisor cohort until the student declares a major. Then the developmental advising model comes back into the picture with declared business students meeting with their assigned faculty advisor in their major from that point on.

All departments/programs provide some type of document to their majors and faculty describing the major or program requirements. Most of the departments/programs provide and maintain a one page checklist of those requirements for ease of keeping track of completed and outstanding requirements. Just a few departments/programs provide lists of internship or pre-professional opportunities though the Career Center maintains general information for all students about internships and pre-professional job opportunities. Very few departments/programs provide an advising syllabus for their advisees. The Business School provides an advising manual to their entire faculty who advise undergraduate students. All faculty who attend the advisor trainings offered during the academic year by the Drahnmann Center receive an advising resources folder. It may be worthwhile to expand and enhance this folder so that it is more in line with an advising manual. Summer faculty advisors receive a summer advising binder during mandatory training prior to orientation. One goal to consider is for the University to develop a general advising syllabus for all incoming students to be distributed in July and September during New Student Orientation.

Once the syllabus is created departments/programs and individual faculty advisors can be encouraged to make use of the syllabus or develop their own syllabus more specific to their department or major. There is a multitude of ad hoc advising that transpires during the day-to-day interaction between students and faculty or staff. In addition to face to face meetings, email is a particularly popular way to communicate with advisees. Many departments and programs post information and resources on their own web page along with the printed materials they supply to students and faculty. With such a diverse range of departments and programs it is not surprising that most majors have developed their own procedures that supplement the University's advising model to meet the needs of their specific area and resources.

Advisor training is very informal. Most departments informally assist their new faculty with advising "taking them under their wing" to help them in this role. This is done primarily by chairs or senior faculty but may also be the responsibility of the administrative assistant. Ten departments/programs encourage their new faculty to attend advising workshops offered by the Drahnman Advising Center. The Business School also offers advising workshops periodically throughout the year to faculty and peer advisors. Business faculty are strongly encouraged to attend these workshops. No department/program requires training of any type of their faculty. Rather it is informal or encouraged. Another area that seems to need some attention is feedback from students about advising. Currently the only information available is from one or two questions on senior surveys or data from external surveys that does not differentiate what kind of advising the student is referring to: department, University, faculty, staff, peers, etc.

Response Summary:

Q1: Assignment of faculty advisors to incoming freshmen and new transfers

Business School: Freshmen are assigned faculty advisors by the Assist Dir of Academic Services for Undergraduate Business. Students are assigned a special first year faculty advisor and a peer advisor. Undeclared transfer students are all assigned to the faculty director of undergraduate business. Declared transfer students are assigned a faculty advisor in their major by the department administrative assistant.

Engineering: Freshmen and transfers are assigned in the same manner. Declared majors are assigned a faculty advisor in their declared major. Undeclared students are assigned an advisor connected to the preference or interest they specified (if any). Computer engineering does the actual assignments to individual faculty. The other departments specify which faculty are available to be assigned advisees based on their own criteria and send all this information to the Operations Manager of the Drahnman Center who does the actual assigning.

College of Arts & Sciences: Departments are given a list of all their incoming majors, freshmen and transfers, who they then assign to their available faculty for advisors. Once majors are assigned the departments inform the Operations Manager of the Drahnman Center what faculty are still available (by number of advisees) for undeclared advisees. The Operations Manager then assigns the undeclared students to the available faculty advisors.

The faculty in biology, psychology, political sciences, communication, liberal studies, (combined sciences) and women's and gender studies only advise majors.

In multiple departments/programs transfer students with declared majors are assigned to the chair of the department to make sure that their particular advising needs are met in a timely fashion. The Business School assigns all undeclared transfer students to the Faculty Director in the Undergraduate Business Programs.

Q2: Assignment of faculty advisors to current students declaring a new major

In all cases the major department or program assigns faculty advisors to current students declaring a major in that department/program when the Program Declaration Form is signed by the department chair. Generally the main criterion is equity of workload with the following exceptions. When appropriate and possible, departments/programs try to accommodate student requests for a specific faculty advisor with expertise relevant to the student's program of study or career plan. Many departments (chemistry, modern languages, music, communication, political science and history) have sub-disciplines or emphases which controls the assignment. Economics has specific advisors for A&S students and specific advisors for business students. Art and art history has specific faculty advisors for studio art and specific advisors for art history. Computer engineering tries to match female students with female faculty advisors. The student submits the signed program declaration form to the Drahmann Advising Center which then inputs the advisor information into the advising database.

Q3: Departments/programs that provide the following advising resources and documents to students and/or faculty

Document (s) describing program and major requirements	100%
One-page requirements checklist	95%
Advising syllabus/document with student and faculty responsibilities	14%
List(s) of internships or other pre-professional opportunities	29%
Advising manual	5%

Other advising materials provided:

Mechanical engineering - prerequisite tree diagram

Business - Core comparison matrix, first year guidelines, advisor meeting packet

Mathematics and Computer Sciences - Literature on job opportuni

Music - Course descriptions, course syllabi, faculty contact informa

Psychology - Advising resources posted on web page including FAQ page

Religious Studies - Provides course information, handouts, and Core information online

Biology - Quarterly newsletters and emails concerning courses, internships, careers
Combined Sciences – Provides a four year grid for tracking the program requirements
Management – Curriculum samples

Q4: Types of advising in departments/programs and percentages

Individual advising:

Departments/programs where advising is done one-on-one by faculty 100% of the time
anthropology, biology, chemistry, economics, engineering, environmental studies, history,
liberal studies, marketing, mathematics and computer science, music, philosophy, physics,
sociology, theater and dance, women's and gender studies

Departments/programs where advising is not done 100% one-on-one by faculty (with percentages)
accounting (as needed), art and art history (70%), classics (95%), combined sciences (90%),
communication (60%), English (75%), finance (95%), management (50%), modern
languages (80%), political science (60%), psychology (25%), religious studies (75%)

Departments/programs that use staff for individual advising (with percentages)
art and art history (20%), business (50%), English (20%), political science (40%),
psychology (65%), religious studies (25%)

Group advising:

Departments/programs that hold group advising sessions run by faculty (with percentages)
accounting (spring advising), classics (5%), combined sciences (10%), communication
(40%), finance (5%), liberal studies (in addition to 1-1 advising), management (50%),
philosophy did group sessions in the past but not currently

Departments/programs that hold group advising sessions run by staff (with percentages)
psychology (10%)

Other : Business School - peer advising (17%)
Modern languages - Informal advising by staff (20%)
Art and Art History - advisees advised by Drahmman Center or other faculty/staff (5%)
English - undeclared advised by Drahmman Center (5%)
Psychology - thousands of emails answered by faculty and staff advisor

Q5: Do you administer a survey of students to determine the success of your advising practices?

Seventy-five percent of the departments/programs that responded administer a survey of some type. Twenty-five percent do not administer a survey. The surveys that are administered are almost exclusively senior exit surveys with one or two questions about advising. Mechanical engineering seemed to be the only department that administered a survey specifically connected to advising their majors.

Q6: Faculty training

How departments/programs train new faculty for advising:

- Informally through chairs 33%
- Informally through senior faculty 25%
- Informally through administrative staff 16%
- Encourage formal training through the Drahmann Center 43%
- Encourage formal training through administrative staff 5%

Other:

Business School - formal workshops for faculty offered by the Assistant Director of Academic Services for Undergraduate Business Programs

Engineering – informal discussions at department meetings

Accounting – discusses advising in quarterly departmental meetings

Q7: Other procedures or components

19% offer career advice or career events

29% hold meetings in the fall for their majors or students interested in their major

14% offer formal graduate school advice sessions

Accounting are asked to fill out a survey when they declare to give clarify information about classes and graduation. They are encouraged to fill out the Business Advisor meeting packet and email their advisors to set up a meeting when needed.

The Anthropology Club has events that relate to advising (alumni visits, cv/resume info sessions.)

The Business School has developed their own advising model that they piloted last year which offers the option of meeting with a first year advisor or a peer advisor while the student remains undeclared. Once a student declares he or she is assigned a major advisor.

Biology has a number of majors pursuing health related careers so students are referred to the pre-health advisor.

Combined sciences is establishing a combined sciences program council consisting of faculty from six different departments who will be available to majors for advising, both professional and academics, as needed. Students will not be assigned advisors but will know who the advisors are for the major and will be encouraged to set up advising meetings as needed.

Finance tries to emphasize that faculty advisors should be used for mentoring rather than administrative information and refer students to peer advisors or other resources as needed.

Management holds meetings for all majors right before mandatory advising in May and makes sure the students are aware of the advising offered by the undergraduate business office and peer advisors.

The senior administrative assistant in English provides clerical support for seniors for program evaluations and graduation petitions.

Faculty in the Liberal Studies program also advise students in the Eastside Future Teachers Project (EFTP) regardless of their major.
