

Student Government Association
Student Senate
Academic Advising Survey
Fall 2021

Purpose of Assessment

The Student Senate wanted to collect input from the Texas A&M University non first time in college sophomores, juniors and seniors regarding their experiences with academic advising while at Texas A&M University. The Student Senate in conjunction with University Advisors and Counselors (UAC) and the Office for Student Success developed survey questions and contacted Student Life Studies to assist in survey editing, distribution, analysis and report of the survey results.

Key Findings

Student Life Studies identified several key findings that the Student Senate may take under consideration when developing their recommendations based on the results. However, the Student Senate may identify other key findings using their knowledge and understanding of the student community.

- As the response rate was low (4%), care should be taken in making inferences from the survey results and applying them to all undergraduate students' experiences on campus. However, respondents' demographics resembled the sample of students surveyed with only one exception (binary sex), so themes and trends which emerge from the results could be used to inform the improvement of areas of students' advising experiences. The percentage of females responding to the survey was 15 points higher than their representation within the sample of students sent the survey.
- Over three-quarters of respondents indicated interacting with their advisor at least once per semester. Nearly two-thirds noted a preference for in-person advisor interactions, by appointment or drop-in advising, and slightly more than one-quarter preferred virtual (video) advising.
- Respondents' satisfaction with aspects of advising varied; however, they indicated the highest level of satisfaction with time spent in their advising sessions and least satisfaction with availability of advising. The satisfaction rating level for most aspects of advising using a five-point Likert scale generally averaged slightly above the neutral three-point level, and all exhibited standard deviations greater than one, indicating substantial variation in responses.
 - Further analysis of the results of the least satisfying aspect of advising (availability), separating responses by student demographics showed the largest differences by students' college, and little differences by other students' demographics (binary sex, ethnicity, race, first-generation status). Most notable, nearly two-thirds (66%) of respondents from the College of Veterinary Medicine were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with advising availability, unlike respondents from the Colleges of Science, Geosciences and Public Health, of whom 80% or more were very satisfied or satisfied with advising availability.
- Respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with statements describing experiences with their current advisor also varied. Over 80% strongly agreed or agreed that their current advisor

was professional, using a five-point Likert agreement scale; however, the standard deviation was above one, as it was with the other 13 statements describing experience with their current advisor. Respondents least agreed that their current advisor provided guidance that helped inform their post-graduation plans, with only 32% agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement.

- Respondents were asked to share what their current advisors did well and what their current advisors could do to improve their advising sessions. The theme of Relational Advising—that the advisor creates rapport and shows care for students—emerged from the content analysis as a dominant theme in response to both questions. Many students indicated that their advisor showed care and interest in them, and many other students indicated their advisors' further development in this area would improve their advising session. Likewise, the average response to the statement "My current advisor seems genuinely interested in me" rated near neutral on the 5-point Likert agreement scale and showed the most variance of the 13 statements that respondents were asked about regarding their experiences with their current advisor.
 - Separating responses to this item by student demographics showed the largest differences by students' college, and little differences by other students' demographics (binary sex, ethnicity, race, first-generation status). Most notably, more than half of respondents from the College of Veterinary Medicine disagreed or strongly disagreed their advisor seemed genuinely interested in them, whereas 80% of the respondents from the College of Geosciences strongly agreed or agreed their advisors seemed genuinely interested in them.
- The relationship between students' satisfaction with the availability of advising and their response to "My current advisor seems genuinely interested in me" also showed overall a relatively strong and positive correlation, indicating that as respondents' satisfaction with the availability of academic advising increased so their agreement with the statement "My current advisor seems genuinely interested in me" also increased.
- Student Senate representatives should share this report and data tables containing quantitative analysis and qualitative responses with UAC, the Office for Student Success and other interested stakeholders in an effort to collaboratively improve the student advising experience. It is also recommended that the Student Senate provide input, through the involvement of their members or help to involve others within the general student body, into any process or technological changes that impact the quality of the advising experience for students. If further analysis of the data collected with this assessment is needed, please contact Student Life Studies.

Method and Sample

The 26-question survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. Twenty-four questions were quantitative and two were qualitative; due to branching technology not all respondents saw all questions. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel® and Word®. In addition, qualitative responses were analyzed in a formal content analysis conducted in December with an SGA (student) representative, staff representatives from UAC, the University Advising Office and Student Life Studies. Content analysis identified main themes from survey responses; each theme was categorized, and those categories and representative student quotes are presented in this report. The complete responses associated with their assigned theme can be found in separate documents.

The survey was distributed via email to 11,816 randomly selected fall 2021 non first time in college sophomores, juniors and seniors on the College Station campus beginning on October 8, 2021. Up to four reminders were sent to non-respondents before the survey closed on November 18, 2021. Of the 11,815 students successfully receiving the survey (1 email was undeliverable), 443 responded to at least one question, yielding a 4% response rate.

Results

Results will be reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are listed in descending mean or frequency order unless otherwise stated. Coded, summary themes of the qualitative questions are contained in this report; an entire list can be found in a separate document. Data included in this report may also have been disaggregated by college, race/ethnicity and first-generation status which also can be found in a separate document. Students' demographics were pulled from the University's information system based on the students' Universal Identification Number (UIN).

Students responding to the survey were first asked to indicate how often they interacted with their current academic advisor. As shown in Table 1, once a semester was the most frequently selected response.

About how often do you interact with your current academic advisor?	Response Percent [n=443]
Once a semester	42%
Twice a semester	28%
More than twice a semester	18%
Less than once a semester	13%

Table 1: Frequency Meeting Advisor

Next, students were asked about their advising format preference. Over one-third indicated they preferred scheduled in-person interactions and slightly more than one-quarter preferred virtual (video) interactions. Those who selected the "other" preference option could write that preference, and two shared comments. One indicated either in-person or online meetings whichever is most convenient for both parties and the other indicated that they were not able to see anyone in-person due to COVID restrictions but would have it they could.

What is the advising format you prefer?	Response Percent [n=443]
Scheduled appointment, in person interaction	39%
Virtual (video) interaction	27%
Drop-in, in-person interaction	22%
Email	10%
Text/Instant Message (IM)	1%
Phone Call	1%
Other	1%

Table 2: Advising Format Preference

Respondents were asked to select from a timetable list those times they would prefer to have their registration time regardless of other students' registration times. As noted in Table 3, on the next page, more than half selected times prior to 11:00 am.

Which of the following times would you prefer to have your registration time, regardless of other students' registration times?	2021 Response Percent [n=443]
7:00am to 9:00am	28%
9:00am to 11:00am	24%
5:00am to 7:00am	14%
I do not have a preference	12%
11:00am to 1:00pm	9%
7:00pm to 9:00pm	6%
1:00pm to 3:00pm	3%
3:00pm to 5:00pm	2%
5:00pm to 7:00pm	2%

Table 3: Time of Day Preference to Register

Next, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with aspects of their advising experience. Although the means of all statements were slightly above the neutral point of neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, the standard deviation for all statements was greater than one, indicating a diversity of opinions. As shown in Table 4, respondents were most satisfied with the amount of time spent in each advising session and were least satisfied with the availability of advising.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the following aspects of your advising experience:	Very Satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very Dissatisfied (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
Amount of time spent in each advising session.	28%	37%	20%	10%	5%	3.73 (1.12) [377]
Information about deadlines related to institutional policies and procedures.	24%	33%	22%	11%	9%	3.52 (1.24) [377]
The general quality of academic advising that you have received.	28%	28%	13%	18%	14%	3.37 (1.41) [377]
Information about courses, programs, and requirements is provided through your academic advisor.	24%	29%	18%	17%	12%	3.37 (1.33) [377]
Availability of academic advising.	21%	36%	14%	14%	14%	3.35 (1.34) [376]

Table 4: Satisfaction with Aspects of Advising

Respondents who indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the time spent in each advising session were also asked to select from a list of three options which option best described why they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Of the 56 respondents, 70% indicated too little time spent in each advising

session and another 30% selected the “other” option. No one indicated spending too much time in each advising session as the option that best described their dissatisfaction. Those who selected the “other” option could also provide a written response. Sixteen wrote responses; about one-third spoke about the quality, commenting that their advisors were unhelpful and unknowledgeable. Another one-quarter talked about their advisors spending very little time advising them, as two indicated their multiple appointments with advisors lasted, in total, less than three minutes. Notably, there were quite detailed comments by students from the College of Veterinary Medicine about experiencing long delays waiting for advising over Zoom. One answered the survey while waiting, noting “I am currently in a waiting room to meet my advisor on a Zoom call that I have been waiting on for 3 hours now. In this time, I have moved up only EIGHT spots. In the past I've waited for upwards of 4 if not 5 hours before having an advising session that lasted 10 minutes at the most with an extremely unhelpful, arrogant advisor.”

Respondents rated their satisfaction with the availability of academic advising lowest, and the elevated standard deviation indicated high response variation, so response data were disaggregated by college, ethnicity and first-generation status to investigate whether trends regarding differing satisfaction levels with availability appeared based on students’ demographics. Trends in satisfaction level difference by race/ethnicity and first-generation status did not seem pronounced; however, differences by colleges were notable. As shown in Table 5, highlighted, respondents from the College of Veterinary Medicine indicated they were very dissatisfied with the availability of academic advising at least 31 percentage points greater than respondents from any other college. In contrast, less than 10% of students from the Colleges of Geoscience, Public Health and Science indicated dissatisfaction with the availability of advising, and within those colleges more than 80% of respondents indicated satisfaction.

Availability of Academic Advising: College	Very Satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very Dissatisfied (1)
Agriculture (n=43)	28%	19%	14%	26%	14%
Architecture (n=18)	22%	44%	17%	6%	11%
Business (n=29)	35%	35%	3%	14%	14%
Education (n=37)	5%	60%	11%	14%	11%
Engineering (n=105)	22%	35%	18%	10%	15%
General Studies (n=4)	--	50%	25%	25%	--
Geosciences (n=15)	53%	33%	7%	7%	--
Liberal Arts (n=65)	15%	31%	19%	25%	11%
Public Health (n=7)	14%	88%	--	--	--
Science (n=25)	28%	52%	16%	--	4%
Veterinary Medicine (n=26)	4%	21%	11%	18%	46%

Table 5: Satisfaction with Availability of Advising by College (n=376)

Respondents were next asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement to a series of statements that described their experience with their current advisor. As shown in Table 6, on the next page, students were most in agreement that their current advisor was professional, provided them with accurate information, was easy to contact and responded to them in a timely manner. However, they least agreed that their advisors seemed genuinely interested in them, made them aware of high impact practices and academic support services, or provided guidance for the post-graduation plans. Student responses to all statements presented varied considerably, as indicated by the elevated standard deviations.

My current advisor...	Strongly Agreed (5)	Agreed (4)	Neither Agreed nor Disagreed (3)	Disagreed (2)	Strongly Disagreed (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
Is professional	46%	35%	10%	5%	5%	4.11 (1.10) [349]
Provides me with accurate information	31%	36%	18%	10%	6%	3.75 (1.17) [349]
Responds to my communications in a timely manner	31%	36%	15%	9%	9%	3.71 (1.25) [365]
Is easy to contact	34%	33%	13%	11%	10%	3.69 (1.31) [365]
Listens to my concerns	30%	29%	24%	10%	8%	3.62 (1.23) [365]
Clearly communicates what is my responsibility when registering for classes and what the advisor is responsible for regarding my registration	30%	31%	18%	13%	8%	3.61 (1.26) [350]
Clearly answers my questions about the college's academic policies, procedures, and requirements	28%	31%	22%	13%	7%	3.59 (1.22) [349]
Is a good source for academic advice about my major	33%	21%	19%	14%	13%	3.45 (1.41) [350]
Encourages me to see them for help	25%	23%	24%	18%	10%	3.37 (1.30) [364]
Helps me make important educational decisions	27%	24%	18%	18%	14%	3.31 (1.40) [365]
Seems genuinely interested in me	29%	19%	19%	16%	18%	3.27 (1.47) [365]
Has made me aware of high impact practices, which may include internships, study abroad and research opportunities	22%	23%	17%	21%	17%	3.13 (1.42) [349]
Has made me aware of academic support services, which may include supplemental instruction, University Writing Center, and the Math Learning Center	17%	24%	24%	24%	11%	3.13 (1.27) [350]
Provides guidance which helps inform my post-graduation plans	16%	16%	23%	23%	21%	2.84 (1.36) [350]

Table 6: My Current Advisor...

Respondents were asked how likely they were to recommend their current advisor to other students. This question used the Net Promoter Score® (NPS), a customer loyalty metric that gauges how willing a customer is to recommend a product or service, using a 0 to 10 scale. The resulting NPS® was -7; NPS was

calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors (response ratings of 0 to 6) from the percentage of promoters (response ratings 9-10). A positive NPS® (>0) is generally considered good, with the highest performers usually between 50 and 80. The breakdown of the NPS® respondent categories is noted in Table 7. NPS® scores and categories were broken out by college; that data can be found in the appendix 1 attached to this report.

	Percent n=313
Promoter	37%
Passive	18%
Detractor	44%

Table 7: NPS® Respondent Categories

Respondents were asked to share what, in their opinion, their current advisor does well. Two hundred and twenty-nine students shared their opinions, and their comments were categorized into themes. The category of themes and the number of statements associated with those categories are shown in Table 8; some student statements were categorized under multiple themes.

Theme Category	Statements
Relational Advising (create rapport and show care for students)	65
Communications (frequency and responsiveness)	50
Provides useful guidance on academic plans	49
Clear, Concise, Direct Advising	11
Nothing – does nothing well	22
Provides information about co-curricular opportunities	18
Knowledgeable	15
Accessible and Available	10
Everything	10
Does their job - advises	6
Inconsistent Advisor Experience (between advisors)	6
Professionalism	5
Miscellaneous	4

Table 8: What Current Advisors Do Well (n=229)

Next, respondents were asked to share changes that their current advisor could make to improve their advising sessions. Two hundred and eighteen shared their ideas to improve their advising sessions; their comments were categorized into 15 themes. The category of themes and the number of statements associated with those categories are shown in Table 9, on the next page; some statements may display in multiple themes. The highest number of comments were categorized as “Nothing – no suggestions for improvement”; many of the comments contained simple words like “none” or “nothing”. About one-third of those with no suggestions included complements of their current advisors, such as “None, she does an amazing job.” (Architecture), “My current advisor provides me with the best services and answers all the questions I have.” (Business) and “Nothing at all. I love my advisor.” (Engineering)

Theme Category	Statements
Nothing – no suggestions for improvement	56
Relational Advising (create rapport and show care for students)	44
More Availability	41
Improve Communications (frequency and responsiveness)	30
Improve Quality of Advising	28
Advisor Skill Improvement -Training Lacking	28
Clear Advising Expectations	27
Modality of Advising (in-person, Zoom, appointments)	11
Professionalism	10
Longer Advising Sessions	8
Reduce Inconsistencies between Advisors	7
Career Centered Approach	6
Miscellaneous	6
Degree Planning Tool Improvement	3
Assessment	3

Table 9: What Changes Could Improve Advising Sessions (n=218)

The second most populous theme, Relational Advising, (advisor creates rapport and shows care for students) included comments indicating students' experiences could be improved by their advisor displaying some concern for or interest in them specifically. Students' comments included recommendations like "Get to know ME rather than know my degree. Treat me like a human being instead of a number" (Engineering). Another described their experiences with their current advisor, "My advisor is curt, rude, and does not seem to care. When I ask questions [that] I don't know the answer to I am treated like an idiot" (Agriculture). Another student just recommended that "Seeming more interested" (Education) would improve the interaction. Students recognize that advisors could improve this skill through training. One student explained the effects of what they perceive as a deficiency in that skill: "Have them be trained on being approachable because they are cold and rude and demotivates you from reaching out. I told people younger than me to come to me for advice because in my three years I have never received proper aid from the advisors." (Veterinary Medicine)

The quantitative analysis of the agreement scale responses to the question "My current advisor seems genuinely interested in me," shown in Table 6 on page 6, corroborates the comments related to the Relational Advising summary theme noted above in both Tables 8 and 9. Although all agreement scale response statements displayed in Table 6 showed divergent responses, this statement's response exhibited the highest standard deviation accompanied but the fourth lowest mean, so response data were disaggregated by college, ethnicity and first-generation status. The intent was to investigate whether trends from the differing agreement levels with students' perception of advisors' interest emerged based on students' demographics. Trends in agreement level difference by race/ethnicity and first-generation status did not seem pronounced; however, differences by colleges were notable. As shown in Table 10, highlighted, respondents from the College of Veterinary Medicine indicated disagreement (disagree and strongly disagree combined) that their advisor seemed genuinely interested in them at least 17 percentage points greater than respondents from any other college. In contrast, 80% of students from the College of Geosciences agreed and strongly agreed that their advisor seemed genuinely interested in them, 17 percentage points greater than respondents from any other college.

My current advisor seems genuinely interested in me: College	Strongly Agreed (5)	Agreed (4)	Neither Agreed nor Disagreed (3)	Disagreed (2)	Strongly Disagreed (1)
Agriculture (n=42)	24%	24%	17%	17%	19%
Architecture (n=18)	39%	17%	17%	11%	17%
Business (n=27)	44%	7%	11%	26%	11%
Education (n=35)	29%	20%	23%	14%	14%
Engineering (n=103)	33%	21%	14%	14%	18%
General Studies (n=4)	--	50%	50%	--	--
Geosciences (n=15)	67%	13%	7%	7%	7%
Liberal Arts (n=63)	21%	10%	29%	18%	24%
Public Health (n=7)	14%	43%	43%	--	--
Science (n=24)	38%	25%	21%	4%	13%
Veterinary Medicine (n=27)	--	26%	15%	33%	26%

Table 10: Current Advisor Seems Genuinely Interested Agreement Percent by College

The relationship between students' satisfaction with the availability of advising and their response to "My current advisor seems genuinely interested in me" was also analyzed. Overall, the correlation (Pearson Correlation) between the responses was relatively strong and positive, indicating that as respondents' satisfaction with the availability of academic advising increased so their agreement with the statement "My current advisor seems genuinely interested in me" also increased ($r=.600$, $n=364$, $p=.000$). Please refer to the documents titled "SGA Senate Academic Advising Assessment Q10 & Q19 Additional Analyses" within the quantitative analysis output for specific correlation outputs by college.

Demographic information for the survey respondents and the random sample population is included in Table 11, on the following page. In most areas, the respondents' demographics closely resemble the random sample as the categories did not differ significantly from each other at the $p < .05$ level. Only students from the Colleges of Geoscience and Liberal Arts differ above this level, as both have slightly greater representation among respondents than within the random sample. Demographic breakdown by major for both the respondents and the random sample can be found in the attached documents.

Demographic Category	Survey Respondents n=443	Random Sample Population N=11,816
Gender (Binary Sex)		
Female	63%	47%
Male	37%	53%
Ethnicity		
White	62%	58%
Hispanic or Latinx of any Race	21%	25%
Asian	10%	10%
Black Only or multi-racial including Black	3%	3%
Multi-racial, excluding Black	3%	3%
International	1%	1%
Native American Indian /Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	<1%
Unknown or Not Reported	1%	<1%
Classification		
Senior	52%	49%
Junior	30%	29%
Sophomore	18%	22%
College		
Engineering	30%	30%
Liberal Arts	18%	14%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	11%	12%
Education and Human Development	10%	11%
Mays Business School	8%	10%
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Science	7%	5%
Science	6%	5%
Architecture	5%	6%
Geosciences	4%	2%
Public Health	2%	1%
General Studies	1%	3%
Exchange	--	<1%
First Generation Status		
Not First Generation	79%	77%
First Generation	21%	23%

Table 11: Respondents and Random Sample Student Demographics

Background

The Student Government Association (SGA) at Texas A&M University represents all enrolled students on important issues. There are over 1,300 students involved in SGA, according to its website (<http://sga.tamu.edu/>), and its organizational structure consists of three governing branches, 17 committees and commissions. The Student Senate is one of the three governing branches of SGA.

The mission statement of the Student Senate as given at <https://senate.tamu.edu/about/senate-101/> is “The Texas A&M University Student Senate represents all students in order to enhance the Texas A&M experience within our university and communities through research, legislation, and advocacy in accordance with the core values of our institution.” Per the website, the current Student Senate includes “80 Senators, nine officers, three ex-officio officers, and numerous student aides, committee members and liaisons.”

Project Details

The survey represents responses from fall 2021 non-first time in college sophomores, juniors and seniors only as SGA Senate felt that freshmen and first- time in college (FTIC) students did not have enough experience with advising at Texas A&M University to adequately provide informed responses to the survey questions. The advising experiences of all students surveyed were subject to various restrictions to in-person advising due to COVID-19 and changes made to advising processes to accommodate those restrictions. Hence these restricted experiences may have colored the responses to survey questions.

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, division staff can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://slsform.dsaapps.tamu.edu/>.

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Appendix 1: Student Primary College* Q28_NPS® How likely are you to recommend your current advisor to other students? - Group Crosstabulation

		Q28_NPS® How likely are you to recommend your current advisor to other students? - Group					NPS® SCORE
		1 Detractor	2 Passive	3 Promoter	Total		
Student Primary College	Agriculture	Count	12	5	15	32	9.38
		% within Student Primary College	37.5%	15.6%	46.9%	100.0%	
	Architecture	Count	5	2	7	14	14.29
		% within Student Primary College	35.7%	14.3%	50.0%	100.0%	
	Business	Count	8	6	12	26	15.38
		% within Student Primary College	30.8%	23.1%	46.2%	100.0%	
	Education	Count	17	4	11	32	-18.75
		% within Student Primary College	53.1%	12.5%	34.4%	100.0%	
	Engineering	Count	39	18	32	89	-7.87
		% within Student Primary College	43.8%	20.2%	36.0%	100.0%	
	General Studies	Count	1	0	1	2	0.00
		% within Student Primary College	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%	
	Geosciences	Count	2	4	8	14	42.86
		% within Student Primary College	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	100.0%	
	Liberal Arts	Count	25	11	14	50	-22.00
		% within Student Primary College	50.0%	22.0%	28.0%	100.0%	
		Count	2	3	2	7	

Appendix 1: Student Primary College* Q28_NPS® How likely are you to recommend your current advisor to other students? - Group Crosstabulation

		Q28_NPS® How likely are you to recommend your current advisor to other students? - Group			NPS® SCORE		
		1 Detractor	2 Passive	3 Promoter		Total	
Public Health	% within Student Primary College	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	100.0%	0.00	
	Science	Count	8	2	12		22
	% within Student Primary College	36.4%	9.1%	54.5%	100.0%	18.18	
	Veterinary Medicine	Count	20	2	3		25
	% within Student Primary College	80.0%	8.0%	12.0%	100.0%	-68.00	
	Total	Count	139	57	117		313
		% within Student Primary College	44.4%	18.2%	37.4%	100.0%	-7.03