

## 2014-2015 ACADEMIC ADVISING SURVEY

*Undergraduate students (online and traditional degree programs)*

### Key Findings:

- 71% of students “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that meetings (either online or in person) with their advisor(s) are helpful in making important academic decisions.
- More students agreed that their advising needs related to major requirements were met (75%) than their advising needs related to co-curricular activities (49%), career interests/post-graduation plans (52%), and awareness of campus resources (56%).
- 66% of students “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they are satisfied in general with the academic advising they have received so far this academic year.



### THE SURVEY

During Fall 2014, all currently enrolled degree-seeking undergraduates from both traditional and online programs ( $n=7,084$ ) were asked to participate in an online survey about their experiences with academic advising. Undergraduate students were asked to participate in the survey through a series of five email communications (i.e., an invitation and four reminders). Overall, 1,107 undergraduates responded to the survey (an overall response rate of 15.6%). This brief details the principal findings from the survey (note: responses are based on the number of students responding to the relevant survey items).\*

### ADVISING NEEDS

- The percentage of students who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their needs were met was the highest in the following areas:
  - Willingness of advisors to meet face-to-face (87%)
  - Adequacy of time given for advising meetings (81%)
  - Advisor knowledge of major requirements and help with understanding those requirements (75%)
  - Availability of advisors when in need of assistance (75%)
- The percentage of students who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their needs were met was the lowest in the following areas:
  - Encouragement by advisors to participate in co-curricular activities (49%)
  - Advisor discussion of career interests and post-graduation plans (52%)
  - Awareness of campus resources imparted by advisor (56%)
- 71% of students “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that meetings (either online or in person) with their advisor(s) are helpful in making important academic decisions.

A student dual majoring commented:

“Both of my advisors have been incredibly helpful and attentive....I’ve been fortunate enough to have two very dedicated advisors who have helped me tremendously with my transition from high school to college.”

### ADVISING TRANSACTIONS

- Most students (79%) indicated that they received the majority of their academic advising either from their specific advisor assigned in COIN or from an advisor at the UMassD Advising Center.
- Only 8% of students indicated that they received the majority of their academic advising from an advisor *other than* their specific advisor assigned in COIN.
- Concerning their most recent opportunity for academic advising, just 5% of students indicated that they were unable to meet with their assigned advisor and had to get someone else to lift their advising hold so that they could to register.

\*See full survey tables for more detailed findings.

## ADVISING EXPECTATIONS

- Nearly all students (99%) indicated that they expect advisors to be available during posted (online or in person) office hours. Most students (90%) also felt that advisors should have extra (online or in person) office hours during the registration period.
- The majority of students (77%) felt that advisors should release advising holds without a face-to-face meeting based on student requests. 74% of students also expect advisors to be available for appointments outside of office hours.
- Only about half of students (54%) noted that they expect advisors to respond to emails or phone calls on the weekend.
- About half of students (53%) expect that advisors should respond to emails or phone calls within a day. Another 25% of students expect a reply within three days.

658 students submitted comments on the survey. Comments were coded for common themes. The most frequently referenced theme, as highlighted below, appeared in 14% of comments.

Theme: Advisors may or may not possess a strong inclination towards advising

Sample related student comments:

- "My assigned advisor ...did not know the requirements to graduate ... [and] she didn't even know how to lift [holds]. My previous advisor ... is wonderful and has helped me ... to find classes that I needed, strategize[d] with me and lifted my hold in person that same day."
- "Advising is not everyone's strength because it requires time, knowledge of courses within and outside of the core curriculum, and a genuine interest in the students success academically and personally. I feel that it is better to give more advisees to a professor who knows how to advise us rather than dividing us equally and giving us to professors who don't know how to help us."

66% of students indicated that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they were satisfied in general with the academic advising received so far this academic year. Additionally, among students who offered comments that characterized their advising experience (n=621), 57% expressed that they had had a positive advising experience.



## SUMMARY STATISTICS BY STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS\*

	By Advisor Type		By Degree Type	
	Acad Adv Center	Fac Staff Advisor	Traditional	Online
% "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" that meetings (either online or in person) with advisor(s) are helpful in making important academic decisions	83% (n=115)	70% (n=972)	70% (n=1,026)	87% (n=67)
% "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" that satisfied in general with the academic advising received so far this academic year	76% (n=108)	65% (n=933)	65% (n=981)	83% (n=66)

\*Student demographics reflect PeopleSoft indicators (i.e., not self-reported).

**OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT**  
**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH**

Foster Administration, Room 209  
 Email: [instresearch@umassd.edu](mailto:instresearch@umassd.edu)

We're on the Web!  
[www.umassd.edu/oir](http://www.umassd.edu/oir)