

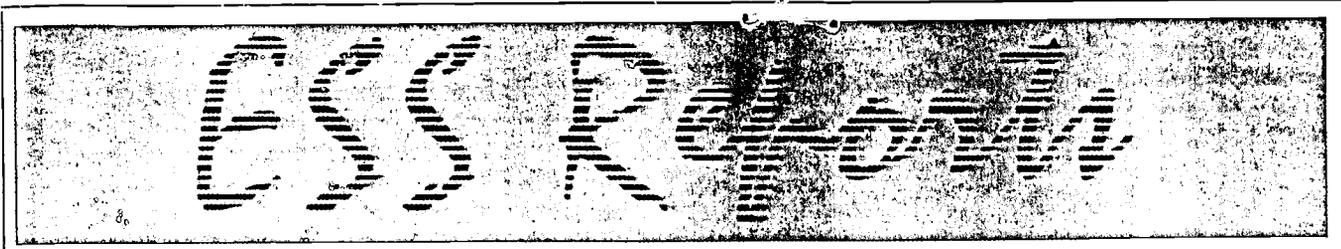
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ABSTRACT

A study was done of student perception of academic advising at the University of Nebraska, Omaha (UNO). The study surveyed 638 students who participated in the early registration process for the Fall 1991 semester. Of those students, 269 were men and 369 were women and 8.3 percent were members of a minority group. The study instrument was the "Survey of Academic Advising" developed by the American College Testing Corporation (ACT) which explores student background, advising information, advising needs, impressions of the advisor and additional information. The completed instruments were processed by ACT and returned to campus for further analysis. Responses presented a mixed picture with 73 percent of students satisfied with the advising delivery system and satisfied with the assistance received from their advisors. At the same time, 51-95 percent of the sample did not discuss most of the advising topics with their advisors and offered mixed reviews with respect to the advisor/advisee relationship. In addition the response percentages and the satisfaction ratings provided by student sample members were below those for a national student sample and were frequently below that group in a statistically significant manner. Included are recommendations for improving the advising at UNO including a university-wide review of the nature and structure of academic advising. (JB)

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ACADEMIC ADVISING AT UNO REPORT OF THE 1991 STUDENT SURVEY

by A. E. Crawford II

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INTRODUCTION

In a study of 944 colleges and Universities, Beal and Noel (1980) reported that inadequate academic advising was given as the number one negative factor in student attrition. Factors such as "positive caring attitude" and "high quality of advising" were the number one and five positive factors influencing student retention. Generally, the research on the influence of academic advising presents a mixed picture. Some studies report that advising has little impact on student retention while others have found that high quality academic advising did have a significant indirect influence on persistence through the impact on grades and satisfaction (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Gordon (1986) cited several studies demonstrating the positive impact on retention related to the quality and quantity of student-faculty interaction, and Forrest (1986) concluded that:

It therefore seems logical to conclude that a well-developed orientation and advising system makes a significant and positive contribution to student acquisition of general knowledge and skills, to the persistence of students to graduation and to their satisfaction as graduates (p. 71).

Academic advising can have a direct, although not necessarily intended, impact for the university. Greenwood (1986) suggested that students who experienced the academic advising process as "... effective, personalized, accurate and efficient ..." become good ambassadors and public relations agents for the institution. The implication was that students who were not satisfied would impact negatively on the institution's public relations (p. 69). She continued:

To offer low-quality academic advising services or to reduce the quality of academic advising because of financial considerations is a short-sighted approach to budget management and reflects misplaced priorities (p.69).

Academic advising appears to fit within two models; prescriptive or developmental. In the prescriptive model, advising tends to involve an information flow from the advisor to the student. Students receive *needed* information and choose whether or not to follow or act on the information. Using this method both students and advisors "see it [advising] as a necessary evil to be endured and negotiated as quickly and painlessly as possible." [Russell & Chickering (1984, p.91)]. In contrast, developmental advising encourages the student to interact with the advisor as "... the student cannot be merely a passive receptacle

for knowledge, but must share equal responsibility with the teacher for the quality of the learning context, process and product." (Crookston, 1972, p.12). While the present survey was not designed to validate either advising method, the responses received may have accomplished that end.

METHOD

The Instrument — The instrument used in this survey was the **SURVEY OF ACADEMIC ADVISING** developed by the American College Testing Corporation (ACT). The instrument is divided into seven sections. Section I, **Background Information**, included questions concerning the age, gender, ethnicity, class standing, etc., of respondents. The question in this section related to the name of one's advisor was redeveloped to allow students to indicate the college in which they were enrolled. Section II, **Advising Information**, consisted of four questions concerning students' impressions of the advising system and the selection of their academic advisor. Section III of the instrument, **Academic Advising Needs**, was comprised of 18 questions related to various advising topics. Individuals were asked to respond to whether or not they had discussed the topic with their advisor. If they had discussed a topic with their advisor, the student was asked to rate their satisfaction with their advisor's assistance on that specific topic on a five point continuum, from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied." Section IV of the survey, **Impressions of Your Advisor**, contained thirty-six questions concerning students' impressions/relationship with their advisor. Ratings were requested on a five point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" and allowed the student to check "does not apply." Section V, **Additional Advising Information**, was comprised of five questions about changing advisors and the frequency of meetings with advisors. There were no locally developed survey questions (Section VI).

Survey Process — Participants were solicited from those individuals participating in the Spring, 1991 Early Registration process for the Fall, 1991 Semester. This occurred during mid-April, 1991. Currently enrolled UNO students who had paid the early registration fee were eligible to participate in the survey. A total of 638 students agreed to participate and returned usable instruments. They represented 8.1% of those early registering and 4% of the UNO Spring, 1991 enrollment.

The completed instruments were processed by ACT and returned to UNO for further data analysis, including comparison to the national Public College Student group. The

results of those analyses have been presented in this report. Additionally, numerous students provided narrative comments in response to Section VII of the instrument. Those materials have been sorted by college and major and will be reported separately as **Advising Survey, 1991: Student Narrative Comments**.

The Sample — The sample was comprised of 638 individuals; 269 men (42%) and 369 women (58%). That compares to 47% men and 53% women in the UNO Spring 1991 enrollment. Students indicating a membership in an ethnic minority group comprised 8.3% of the sample (vs about 8% of the UNO enrollment).

The sample was comprised of a larger number of students under the age of 21 than were enrolled at UNO during the Spring, 1991 Semester (36% to 22%). Twenty-nine percent of the sample were in the 21-25 year age range (vs 32% for UNO), 27% were in the 26-39 year age range (vs 35% UNO) and 11% were in the 40 plus year age range — the same as for the university. Seventy-two percent of the sample described themselves as full-time students (12 plus credit hours for undergraduates and 9+ credit hours for graduate students) (vs 45% of the UNO Spring, 1991 enrollment). The sample was comprised of 42% Freshmen/Sophomores (the same as UNO), 50% Juniors/Seniors (vs 36% UNO) and 8% Graduate and Special students (vs 22% UNO). The sample, thus, had a clear bias toward undergraduate interests.

Almost 9 of every 10 sample members indicated that their primary purpose for entering UNO was to obtain a Bachelor's or higher degree (88%). Three percent, respectively indicated no degree goal, plans to transfer out of UNO at the time they initially enrolled, or that they were taking courses for self improvement, certification, or job relatedness. One-half of the sample (49.8%) entered UNO directly from high school, 41% indicated that they had been transfer students from other 2 or four year colleges or universities, 5% indicated vocational/technical schools as their origin, and 3% reported that they initially entered UNO from graduate or professional college.

The self-reported overall grade averages of sample members indicated that 26% reported averages of between 3.50-4.00 (vs 31% UNO), 25% reported 3.0-3.49 (vs 21% UNO), 27% reported 2.5-2.99 (vs 22% UNO), and 15% reported grade averages in the 2.0-2.49 range (vs 16% UNO). Six percent reported a grade average below 2.0 (vs 8% UNO). 1% indicated no UNO grade average or did not respond to the question.

Twenty-nine percent of the students responding to the survey indicated that they were currently married. One in eight (12.5%) reported that they were working 41 or more hours each week. Twenty-one percent of the sample stated they were not working or were only working 1 to ten hours weekly and thirty-two percent of the sample indicated that they were working thirty-one or more hours each week.

RESULTS

The results of the survey are reported in three sections; General Advising Data, Academic Advising Needs, and Impressions of Advisor.

General Advising Data — Seven questions from sections II and V of the survey instrument comprised this area. **A clear majority of the sample responded that the present UNO advising system "Met their Needs"**. Seventy-three percent of the sample indicated at least "adequate" or above in response to the question. There were no real differences between men and women with respect to this question. Twenty-seven percent of the UNO students indicated that the advising system was not adequate to their needs. This compares to only 17% of the national

Public College Student group rating their advising system(s) as less than adequate while 83% indicated their advising system was at least adequate.

UNO students described an advising system organized in a different manner than did students nationally. Thirty-five percent of the UNO sample indicated that their advisor was a faculty member versus 74% for the national group. Forty-six percent of the UNO students indicated that an "Advising Center Staff Member (Full-Time Advisor)" was assigned to them. Only 15% of the national group so indicated. Ten percent of the UNO students said that they did not have an assigned advisor while only 5% of the national group so indicated.

There was practically no difference between the UNO student sample and the national group in the length of time students had been assigned to their advisor. Fifty-three percent of the UNO students had been assigned to their advisor for less than one year (vs 58% nationally). One-fourth of the UNO students had their advisor for 1-2 years (vs 23% nationally) while 13% had been assigned to their advisor for over 2 years (vs 12% nationally). There was a 10% no response rate at UNO (7% nationally).

Four of every ten members of the UNO student sample indicated that they had changed their advisor at least once since enrolling at the university (38% nationally). Most students locally and nationally did not provide reasons for changing their advisor (64% and 65% respectively). Only 4% of the UNO students and 3% of the national group indicated that advisor changes were related to student dissatisfaction. Changes of major or other administrative changes accounted for 32% of the reasons given for advisor changes reported by both UNO students and members of the national group.

There were some differences between the UNO student sample and the national level group with respect to the frequency with which they meet with their advisor during the past year. Ten percent of the UNO students reported never meeting with their advisor during the year (vs 7% nationally). Over half of the UNO students (52%) reported meeting with their advisor 1-2 times during the year (vs 39% nationally) while only 27% of the UNO students reported more than two annual advisor meetings (vs 46% for the national group). While large numbers of students did not respond (24% UNO and 22% nationally), a greater percentage of UNO students than of the national group was not satisfied with the number of advisor meetings. Only 45% of the UNO students were satisfied with the number of meetings while 31% were not satisfied. This contrasts with the 57% of the national group who were satisfied while only 21% of that group were not satisfied.

Finally, little time was spent in any one advising meeting at either the UNO or national level. Well over half of the groups (59% UNO and 58% national) reported spending 0-15 minutes in each meeting with their advisor. Nineteen percent of the UNO students and 23% of the national group reported spending 16-30 minutes per meeting with their advisor while only 4% of the UNO students and 5% of the national group reported spending over 30 minutes in any one meeting with their advisor (12% of the UNO and 9% of the national group did not respond to the question).

Academic Advising Needs — Data from this part of the survey was developed in two parts. First, participants were asked to determine whether or not they and their advisor had discussed each of eighteen topics. Secondly, those who had discussed the topic were then asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the assistance received from their advisor. Table 1 provides the results of those responses.

Three of the topic areas appear to have been of some interest to both the UNO sample and to the national group.

Forty-nine percent of the UNO sample indicated that they had discussed meeting requirements for graduation, certification, etc. with their advisor (vs 42% nationally). Forty-eight percent of the UNO sample stated that they had discussed "My Academic Progress" and "Scheduling/registration procedures" with their advisor versus 50% and 65%, respectively, from the national group. All of the other topic areas were discussed by fewer than 30% of the UNO sample members — in most instances fewer than one in five of the students. This level of discussion activity was closely mirrored by the national group.

In order to determine a level of potential interest by UNO sample members, the "Have Discussed" and the "Did Not Discuss But Should Have" response percentages were combined. In addition to the three original topics of some interest, UNO Sample members indicated that there were five other topic areas where some discussion did or should have occurred (40% to 49%). Those areas included "Identifying Career Areas . . .", "Clarifying Life/Career Goals", "Dropping/adding courses", "Finding a job after college . . .", and "Selecting/changing my major . . .". Responses from students in the national group again mirrored those of UNO sample members.

Large numbers of UNO students were satisfied with the assistance they received from their current advisor with respect to the topics questions (see table 1). The percentages of UNO students indicating satisfaction with their advisor's assistance was greater than 50% for all but two of the eighteen topic areas. For three areas the percentages satisfied were over 70% and for 12 topic areas over 60% of the UNO sample indicated satisfaction or better with the assistance received. Further, all of the satisfaction averages were on the "satisfied" side of the scale. That is, where a score of "3.00" was equal to a "neutral" response, 1's and 2's to a "less than satisfactory" and 4's and 5's a "satisfactory or better" response, UNO sample members provided ratings for the topic areas that were above 3.00.

Less than half of the UNO sample members indicated they were satisfied with the assistance received from their advisor with respect to "Obtaining employment on campus" (48%) and "Withdrawing/transferring from this institution" (36%).

The generally favorable responses from UNO sample members to this portion of the survey are mitigated by comparison of the responses from UNO to the national level data. While caution must be exercised in comparing local to national data, such comparisons are also useful in placing the survey results in perspective.

The UNO sample members' satisfaction percentages averaged 11 percentage points lower than the National Public College Students. The ratings for the two areas where less than half of the UNO students provided "satisfied" percentages were more than 20 percentage points below the national group. Further, UNO sample members' "dissatisfied" rating percentages averaged 5% higher than the national group. In fact, 12 of the 18 topic categories produced double-digit negative percentages by UNO sample members.

All average satisfaction ratings provided by the national Public College Student group were higher than those produced by the UNO sample! Additionally, the differences between those averages were statistically significant in eight of the eighteen categories. Even though the average ratings were on the positive side of the scale, the difference in the satisfaction average for UNO sample members with respect to their satisfaction with the assistance provided by their advisor with respect to "Meeting requirements for graduation, student teaching, certification, etc." and the national Public College Student group was significantly lower at the $p=.001$ level! The differences between the UNO sample and the national Public college student group in the areas of "Scheduling/registration procedures", "Clarifying my life/career goals", "Identifying career areas which fit my current skills, abilities, and interests", and "Obtaining

TABLE I
ADVISING NEEDS AND SATISFACTION WITH ADVISING SERVICES

My Current Advisor and I:				Topic/Issue	Frequency		Student's Satisfaction With Assistance From Current Advisor				UNO Public College Difference		
Have Not Disc'd but should have		Have Discussed			UNO	Public Colleges	Satisfied %##		Dissatisfied %##			Satisfaction Avg.	
UNO %	Nat'l %	UNO %	Nat'l %				UNO	Nat'l	UNO	Nat'l		UNO	Nat'l
19	19	48	50	1. My academic progress	309	12,491	72	76	6	4	3.89	3.91	-.02
15	9	48	65	2. Scheduling/registration procedures	309	16,387	68	76	12	8	3.77	3.94	-.17 **
15	11	27	45	3. Dropping/adding courses	169	11,308	66	77	8	5	3.77	3.98	0.21
23	23	11	11	4. Obtaining credit thru-non-trad. means	68	7,801	60	68	12	8	3.79	3.85	-.06
12	12	28	25	5. Sel/Changing my major area of study	180	6,367	62	74	11	7	3.80	3.95	-.15
18	22	49	42	6. Meeting graduation/cert. requirements	310	10,638	62	76	14	8	3.72	3.92	-.20 **
19	22	8	14	7. Improving my study skills and habits	53	3,563	70	74	6	4	3.98	3.99	-.01
28	28	13	16	8. Matching my learning style to particular courses, sections, or instructors	80	3,900	73	78	11	4	3.92	4.02	-.10
16	15	8	12	9. Obtaining remedial/tutorial assistance	49	2,892	61	72	6	5	3.76	3.93	-.17
24	24	23	25	10. Clarifying my life/career goals	145	6,272	62	75	15	5	3.67	3.97	-.30 **
29	31	20	23	11. Identifying career areas which fit my current skills, abilities, and interests	129	5,708	67	78	13	5	3.74	4.03	-.29 **
22	23	13	20	12. Coping with academic difficulties	84	5,040	66	75	19	7	3.70	3.93	-.23
25	21	11	13	13. Obtaining financial aid	69	3,273	59	69	16	9	3.48	3.90	-.42 **
12	17	11	13	14. Obtaining employment on campus	42	2,523	48	72	12	7	3.53	3.96	-.43 *
33	33	8	13	15. Finding a job after college/job placement	53	3,153	63	70	15	6	3.59	3.92	-.33 *
27	26	11	17	16. Continuing my educ. after graduation	73	4,250	66	74	6	4	3.85	4.02	-.17
8	10	5	8	17. Withdrawing/transf'r from this institution	21	1,878	36	65	13	9	3.30	3.84	-.54 *
8	8	5	10	18. Dealing with personal problems	33	2,548	64	81	3	4	4.00	4.20	0.20

#Combines "Very Satisfied" & "Satisfied" responses. ##Combines "Very Dissatisfied" & "Dissatisfied" responses.

*Difference significant at the $p=.05$ level. **Difference significant at the $p=.01$ level. ***Difference significant at the $p=.001$ level (two-tailed test).

NOTE: Findings of statistical significance do not address the issue of practical significance or the appropriateness of the specific comparisons.

Satisfaction averages were computed using the following values: Very Satisfied = 5, Satisfied = 4, Neutral = 3, Dissatisfied = 2, Very Dissatisfied = 1.

financial aid" were all statistically significant (lower) at the $p = .01$ level. Four of these areas were among the most frequently discussed or should have been discussed topics listed by the UNO student sample.

Impressions of Your Advisor — This section of the survey was comprised of thirty-six questions related to personal qualities and characteristics of the student's advisor, preparedness of the advisor to work with the student, willingness of the advisor to interact with the advisee, and a general indication on the part of the student that their advisor was a helpful individual whom they would recommend to other students.

The responses of UNO sample members to the questions concerning impressions of their advisor were not favorable (see Table II). UNO sample members provided "agree" percentages close to or exceeding the 50% level for only eight of the thirty-six questions (versus twenty 50%+ response questions for the national Public College student group). Further, in no instance did the UNO sample "agree" percentage exceed that of the national group. The "dis-

agree" response percentages for UNO sample members exceeded those of the national group for 33 of the 36 questions. For nine questions, the UNO sample member's "disagree" percentage approached or exceeded one in five persons (vs 2 questions for the national group). For example, only 41% of the UNO sample agreed with the statement "My Advisor: Knows who I am" while 29% disagreed with that statement (vs 63% and 18%, respectively, nationally). Or, while only 28% of the UNO sample members agreed that "My Advisor: Encourages my interest in an academic discipline (40% nationally), 17% disagreed with the statement (12% nationally).

The differences between the agreement averages for UNO sample members and students in the national Public College Student group were statistically significant for 34 of the 36 questions. For thirty-one of the questions, the agreement average differences were significant at the $p = .001$ level; one question $p = .01$; and two questions $p = .05$. In every instance, the UNO sample agreement averages were lower than those of the national Public College Student group. The

TABLE II
STUDENT IMPRESSIONS OF ADVISOR

Text of Statement MY ADVISOR:	Level of Agreement				Agreement Averages UNO/Public		
	Agree #		Disagree %##		UNO	Nat'l	College
	UNO	Nat'l	UNO	Nat'l	Students	Sample	Difference
1. Knows who I am	41	63	29	18	3.18	3.69	-.51 ***
2. Is a good listener	55	62	8	8	3.74	3.89	-.15 ***
3. Expresses interest in me as a unique person	38	48	16	15	3.35	3.57	-.22 ***
4. Respects my opinions and feelings	48	57	9	7	3.62	3.80	-.18 ***
5. Is available when I need assistance	45	53	14	15	3.34	3.57	-.23 ***
6. Provides a caring, open atmosphere	45	54	11	10	3.52	3.70	-.18 ***
7. Makes sure we understand each other	42	52	14	11	3.43	3.65	-.22 ***
8. Respects my right to make my own decisions	59	67	6	5	3.85	4.03	-.18 ***
9. Provides me with accurate information about requirements, prerequisites, etc.	53	62	17	12	3.57	3.78	-.21 ***
10. Keeps me up to date on changes in acad. req'ts	37	43	19	18	3.27	3.39	-.12 *
11. Refers me to other sources from which I can get help	31	46	21	13	3.19	3.52	-.33 ***
12. Encourages me to assume an active role in planning my academic program	47	57	11	8	3.57	3.76	-.19 ***
13. Accepts constructive feedback concerning his/her effectiveness as an advisor	20	29	11	8	3.18	3.36	-.18 ***
14. Encourages me to achieve my educ. goals	44	54	8	8	3.56	3.73	-.17 ***
15. Helps me identify obstacles I need to overcome to reach my educational goals	35	42	15	12	3.35	3.49	-.14 ***
16. Takes the initiative in arranging meetings with me	14	27	41	31	2.47	2.84	-.37 ***
17. Is on time for appointments with me	49	54	8	8	3.71	3.74	-.03 ***
18. Clearly defines advisor/advisee responsibilities	28	39	21	15	3.14	3.35	-.21 ***
19. Allows sufficient time to discuss issues/problems	51	60	16	10	3.55	3.73	-.18 ***
20. Is willing to discuss personal problems	15	31	10	7	3.10	3.43	-.33 ***
21. Anticipates my needs	24	33	18	13	3.10	3.28	-.18 ***
22. Helps me select courses that match my interests and abilities	40	50	16	12	3.40	3.57	-.17 ***
23. Helps me to examine my needs, interests, values	27	38	18	13	3.16	3.38	-.22 ***
24. Is familiar with my academic background	41	50	19	15	3.33	3.51	-.18 ***
25. Encourages me to talk about myself and my college experiences	19	30	27	20	2.88	3.12	-.24 ***
26. Encourages my interest in an academic discipline	28	40	17	12	3.18	3.40	-.22 ***
27. Encourages involvement in extracurricular activity	13	26	27	18	2.76	3.08	-.32 ***
28. Helps me explore careers in my field of interest	20	31	25	18	2.93	3.19	-.26 ***
29. Is knowledgeable about courses outside my major area of study	30	45	16	11	3.23	3.51	-.28 ***
30. Seems to enjoy advising	49	56	11	10	3.64	3.70	-.06
31. Is approachable and easy to talk to	57	64	9	9	3.79	3.89	-.10 *
32. Shows concern for my professional growth and development	29	47	16	11	3.25	3.53	-.28 ***
33. Keeps personal information confidential	33	51	3	2	3.62	3.86	-.24 ***
34. Is flexible in helping me plan my acad. program	45	56	11	6	3.56	3.74	-.18 ***
35. Has a sense of humor	50	61	7	6	3.76	3.88	-.12 **
36. Is a helpful, effective advisor whom I would recommend to other students	43	55	16	13	3.49	3.67	-.18 ***

#Combines "Strongly Agree" & "Agree" responses. ##Combines "Strongly Disagree" & "Disagree" responses.

*Difference significant at the $p = .05$ level. **Difference significant at the $p = .01$ level. ***Difference significant at the $p = .001$ level.

UNO Student N=638. National Public College N=25,113

NOTE: Findings of statistical significance do not address the issue of practical significance or the appropriateness of the specific comparisons.

Satisfaction averages were computed using the values: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1.

agreement average ratings were lower in this section of the survey than for the section on advising topics for both the UNO sample and the national group. However, the rating drop was greater for the UNO sample than for the national group. The questions with the greatest difference between the UNO sample and the national Public College Student Group were: 1, "Knows who I am"; 16, "Takes the initiative in arranging meetings with me"; 11, "Refers me to other sources from which I can obtain assistance"; 20, "Is willing to discuss personal problems"; and 27, "Encourages my involvement in extracurricular activities".

Four of the agreement averages presented by the UNO sample were below 3.00. That is, with a scale of 3 as "neutral", 1 or 2 "disagree" and 4 or 5 "agree" the general direction of student responses was toward disagreement. The Public College group only produced one question where the agreement average was below 3.00. Questions resulting in below 3.00 averages were: 16, "Takes the initiative in arranging meetings with me" (2.47 UNO vs 2.84 national); 25, "Encourages me to talk about myself and my college experiences" (2.88 UNO vs 3.12 national); 27, "Encourages my involvement in extracurricular activities" (2.76 UNO vs 3.08 national); and 28, "Helps me explore careers in my field of interest" (2.93 UNO vs 3.19 national).

Finally, the question "My Advisor: Is a helpful, effective advisor whom I would recommend to other students" produced the following responses. Forty-three percent of the UNO sample agreed with the statement (vs 55% of the national Public College Student group) and sixteen percent (one in six) of the UNO sample disagreed with the statement (vs 13% nationally). The question produced a satisfaction average of 3.47 for the UNO sample; significantly lower statistically ($p=.001$) than the 3.67 rating produced by the national Public College Student group.

This report has presented data with respect to the total UNO student sample. The reader needs to be aware that survey data was developed for fourteen sub-groups. Among those sub-groups were: men, women, ethnic minorities, graduate students, and students age 26 years and older. In most instances there were few major response percentage departures by sub-groups from the total group percentages. However, some marked differences were apparent. The UNO ethnic minority sub-group consistently presented satisfaction percentages and averages which were lower than those of the total UNO sample. This group also presented dissatisfaction percentages which were higher than those for the total sample. This phenomenon was often true for those members of the sub-group identified as individuals not seeking a degree. In contrast, graduate students, those 26 years of age and older, and upperclassmen, sometimes presented satisfaction percentages and averages which were higher than those for the total sample.

DISCUSSION

The responses of the UNO sample members to this survey present a mixed picture. A large number (73%) of the UNO students were satisfied with the advising delivery system and reported satisfaction with the assistance received from their advisors. At the same time, large numbers (51%-95%) of the sample did not discuss most of the advising topics with their advisors and presented "mixed reviews with respect to the advisor/advisee relationship". Further, the response percentages and the satisfaction ratings provided by the UNO sample members were below those for the national Public College Student group and were frequently below that group in a statistically significant manner. Further, ratings provided in the present survey were lower than ratings given to comparable questions in previous surveys completed by UNO students (UNO, 1987).

The UNO sample is generally representative of the overall UNO student population. Ethnic minorities and lower division students were represented in the sample in proportion to their UNO enrollment. Graduate students were under-represented in the sample in proportion to their numbers in the population while upper division students were over-represented. The sample was also more representative of full-time enrolled students. While efforts were made to include evening students in the sample, the extent to which that occurred cannot be verified.

The fact that the advising topic areas were discussed by so few of the students and advisors might be explained by the findings of the limited number of contacts between student and advisor coupled with the illusion that "advising" consists of a meeting of between 0 and 15 minutes. That findings of this nature were reported by both the local (UNO) and national level raises concerns about what members of the student body consider to be the content and extent of an advising session.

Students provided strong evidence of not being satisfied with their advisors and many aspects of the process through their responses to the survey questions — in contrast to their response to the "system meeting needs" question. Yet, at both the UNO and national level few students indicated that they had changed advisors because of dissatisfaction. While it is possible that many masked their true beliefs in a "no response" or "blank response", it is also possible that the level of commitment to academic advising to the extent of changing advisors is quite low on the part of many students.

The types of academic advising "needs" represented by questions in which a majority of UNO sample members provided positive responses and yet had satisfaction averages below those of the national Public College Student group are basic to academic advising. The overall positive direction of the ratings for those questions suggests that examining areas with higher dissatisfied ratings would be more beneficial. Along those lines, there were five topic areas in which 1 in 7 to 1 in 5 of the students replied in a negative manner (see Table I, #'s 12, 13, 10, 15, and 6). While topics such as "obtaining financial aid" or "finding a job after college" might not be seen as directly in the line of advisor's duties, there can be no question about the appropriateness of topics such as "meeting graduation/certification requirements," "clarifying career/life goals," or "coping with academic difficulties" to the advising process.

That less than half of the sample supported statements that their advisor knew who they were or respected them as unique individuals, or respected their opinions and feelings or was available when the advisee needed assistance succinctly sums up the view of advisors presented by many UNO students. That percentages of positive responses to these types of questions have declined between the 1986 and 1991 surveys is indicative of the changing atmosphere related to academic advising on the UNO campus in the minds of a large portion of the student body. The fact that the satisfaction averages were significantly lower than those for the national group further solidifies that impression.

The discrepancy between the somewhat positive ratings given by students to the "Advising Needs" questions and the much lower ratings given to the "Impressions of Advisor" questions suggest that at least two factors were present. First, those students who did discuss topics with their advisors were generally satisfied with what occurred while students who did not provide ratings in this area were not as satisfied with their advisors or the manner in which needs were being met. Second, the response set of students toward their advisor and the advising process, whether or not they knew who their advisors were, had met with

them at all, or had interacted with the system to any great extent triggered a negative response with respect to the questions related to impressions of advisor that were not activated by the advising needs questions.

In fairness to many academic advisors who do care, are available for students, and possess accurate up-to-date information, it is noted that several individual advisors were cited by name as caring, knowledgeable, informed persons. They were given the highest positive ratings by sample members. It is equally important to note that the organizational structure of an institution as large as UNO may impact on the delivery of advising services. Questions on the survey may trigger students to respond that they and their advisor did not discuss a topic. In fact, the university may have a specialized unit to assist the student with that concern, issue, or topic area. In a smaller institution, the advisor would be expected to provide the direct assistance requested.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The data clearly support the need for a university-wide review of the nature and structure of academic advising.
2. Expand present efforts and develop techniques to assist faculty and collegial academic advisors to address issues of concern such as:
 - a. The type and range of topics to be included in discussions between advisors and advisees.
 - b. Student perceptions that academic advisors lack interest in the advising needs of students.
3. Utilize the New Student Orientation program and collegial correspondence to educate students concerning the role and responsibilities of students and advisors in the academic advising process.

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