

Graduating Senior Survey 2016 – Selected Results on Academic Advising

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment | George Mason University
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The Graduating Senior Survey (GSS) was administered to 5,086 seniors in the 2015-2016 academic year (summer and fall 2015, spring 2016), with a response rate of 36%. This document presents selected results related to students’ experience with and perception of academic advising. Complete GSS 2016 results for the university, by college/school, and by department are available at ira.gmu.edu.

Meeting with Academic Advisors

- Overall, one-half of the respondents (51%) met with academic advisors 3 - 6 times while at Mason; slightly over one-third (35%) did so at least 7 times (Table 1).
- The number of times students met with academic advisors in person varied significantly by college ($p < .001$, Chi-square), with CVPA and S-CAR doing noticeably better at the higher end (i.e., 7 times or more: 52- 67% compared to 25-39% for other colleges/schools) (Table 1).
- The frequency of meeting with academic advisors also varied significantly by transfer status ($p < .001$, Chi-square). For example, 45% of the graduates who started at Mason as freshmen (referred to as ‘native’) met with their advisors at least seven times, compared to 27% of transfer students (Figure 1).

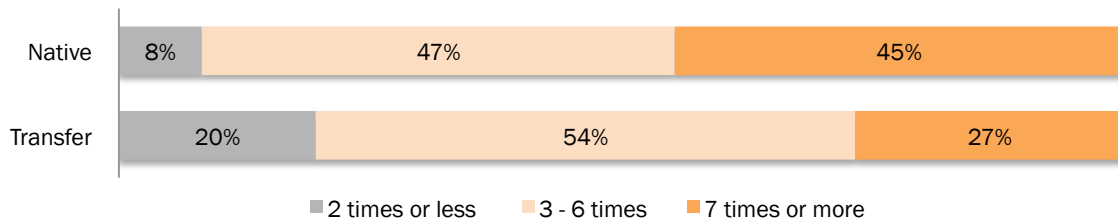
Table 1. Meeting with Academic Advisors: Overall and by College

How many times have you met in person with an academic advisor during your time at Mason?

	2 times or less	3 – 6 times	7 times or more
Overall (n=1651) ¹	14%	51%	35%
CVPA (n=80)	5%	44%	52%
COS (n=162)	12%	53%	33%
S-CAR (n=27)	0%	33%	67%
CEHD (n=64)	9%	52%	39%
CHHS (n=139)	30%	46%	25%
CHSS (n=620)	11%	52%	37%
Schar (n=56)	16%	50%	34%
Business (n=227)	22%	52%	26%
Volgenau (n=283)	14%	51%	34%

¹ Students with double majors from two different colleges were counted once in calculating overall n and counted twice in calculating college n.

Figure 1. Meeting with Academic Advisor: by Transfer Status



Based on 1,651 respondents (native=738, transfer=913).

Contacting Academic Advisors by Phone, Email, or Skype

- Overall, one-third of the students contacted academic advisors 3-6 times for help by phone, email, or Skype while they were at Mason; another 25% did so at least seven times (Table 2).
- Variation emerged by college ($p < .001$, Chi-square), with S-CAR and CEHD's students reporting significantly more frequent contact with academic advisors by phone, email, or Skype (e.g., 51-53% for 7 times or more, compared to 6-38% for other colleges/schools) (Table 2).

Table 2: Contacting Academic Advisors (Not in Person): Overall and by College

How many times have you consulted with an academic advisor by phone, email, or Skype?

	2 times or less	3 – 6 times	7 times or more
Overall (n=1649) ¹	43%	32%	25%
CVPA (n=80)	24%	39%	38%
COS (n=162)	46%	29%	24%
S-CAR (n=27)	34%	15%	51%
CEHD (n=64)	14%	33%	53%
CHHS (n=139)	40%	31%	30%
CHSS (n=618)	39%	35%	27%
Schar (n=56)	36%	37%	27%
Business (n=227)	69%	25%	6%
Volgenau (n=283)	46%	32%	21%

¹ Students with double majors from two different colleges were counted once in calculating overall n and counted twice in calculating college n.

Perception of Academic Advising

- The majority of the graduates (87%) strongly agreed or agreed that academic advisors helped them understand degree requirements and provided a caring and positive atmosphere when meeting with students (Table 3).
- 75% of transfer students confirmed the value of their academic advisor's guidance in helping them explore their academic interests, a significantly higher rate compared to 69% of native students (Table 3).

Table 3: Perception of Academic Advising by Transfer Status

	Native	Transfer
My academic advisor helped me understand degree requirements.	87%	87%
My academic advisor helped me understand how activities outside the classroom (e.g., internships, research, study abroad, clubs, etc.) contribute to my long term academic and career goals.	57%	57%
When I met with an academic advisor in person, I felt like he/she listened to my concerns and created an open, respectful, and inclusive atmosphere.	87%	87%
Academic advisors who work with undeclared students helped me explore my academic interests	69%	75%*

Percentages are for "strongly agree" and "agree" combined ("N/A or don't know" were excluded from the calculation).

Based on students who responded to these questions. N for native = 330-726; N for transfer = 427-874.

* $p < .05$, t-test (two-sided).

Academic Advising and Student Satisfaction

- In general, students who met with academic advisors more frequently were more likely to report satisfaction with their Mason experience, particularly in terms of *sense of belonging*, *education received in their major*, *involvement in campus activities*, *academic advising*, and *career support from faculty and staff* (Table 4).
- For example, students who had met with academic advisors at least seven times while they were at Mason scored higher on all satisfaction measures than their peers who met with academic advisors only two or fewer times (Table 4).

Table 4. Student Satisfaction by Frequency of Meeting with Academic Advisors

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your education at Mason?	Meeting with Academic Advisor			Sig.	Post Hoc Comparison
	<=2 times (1)	3-6 times (2)	>=7 times (3)		
Sense of belonging at Mason	2.83	2.96	3.07	***	1<2, 3; 2<3
Overall Mason experience	2.93	3.07	3.14	**	1<2, 3
Education you received in your major	3.13	3.28	3.36	***	1<2, 3; 2<3
Your level of involvement in campus activities	2.56	2.71	2.82	***	1<2, 3; 2<3
Academic advising	2.67	3.03	3.35	***	1<2, 3; 2<3
Career support from faculty and staff	2.63	2.81	2.88	***	1<2, 3
Preparation for work	2.72	2.83	2.91	**	1<2, 3
Preparation for post-baccalaureate study	2.71	2.86	2.88	*	1<2, 3
If you were to do it all over again, would you attend George Mason University?	3.05	3.11	3.20	*	1<3

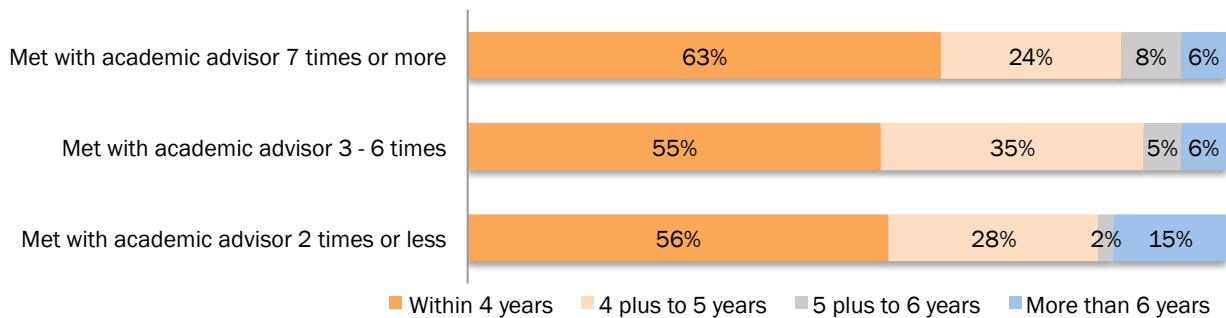
Rating scale for satisfaction measures: 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied). Numbers represent averages.

Based on students who responded to these questions. N for <=2 times: 236-239; N for 3-6 times: 814-822; N for >=7 times: 554-560.
* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001, ANOVA.

Academic Advising and Time-to-Degree

- The frequency of meeting with academic advisors is significantly associated with time-to-degree ($p<.01$, Chi-square). For example, students who met with academic advisors at least 7 times graduated within 4 years at a higher rate (63%) than those who used academic advising service less frequently (55-56%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Time-to-Degree by Frequency of Meeting with Academic Advisors



Based on 738 respondents who were initially enrolled at Mason as first-time freshmen and who responded to the question about how frequently they had met with academic advisor in person. N for <=2 times: 61; N for 3-6 times: 347; N for >=7 times: 330.