

Graduating Senior Survey 2017 – Selected Results on Academic Advising

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness | George Mason University

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The Graduating Senior Survey (GSS) was administered to 5,270 seniors in the 2016-17 academic year (summer and fall 2016, spring 2017), with a response rate of 32%. This document presents selected results related to students’ experience with and perception of academic advising. Complete GSS 2017 results for the university, by college/school, and by department are available at <https://ira.gmu.edu/survey-results-and-reports/>.

Meeting with Academic Advisors

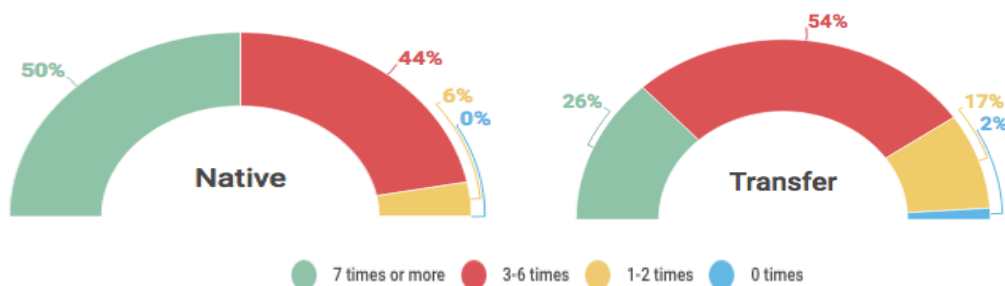
- Overall, about one-half of the respondents (49%) met with academic advisors 3 - 6 times while at Mason; over one-third (37%) did so at least 7 times. Only 1% of the respondents never met with academic advisors (Table 1).
- The number of times students met with academic advisors in person varied significantly by college ($p < .001$, Chi-square), with CVPA and S-CAR doing noticeably better at the higher end (i.e., 7 times or more: 60-66% compared to 24-43% for other colleges/schools) (Table 1).
- Variation emerged in using the academic advising service by transfer status ($p < .001$, Chi-square). For example, 50% of the graduates who started at Mason (referred to as ‘native’) met with their advisors at least seven times compared to 26% 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?				
	0 times	1 - 2 times	3 - 6 times	7 times or more
Overall (n=1529) ¹	1%	12%	49%	37%
CVPA (n=79)	0%	3%	32%	66%
COS (n=133)	2%	11%	50%	37%
S-CAR (n=15)	0%	7%	33%	60%
CEHD (n=61)	3%	13%	41%	43%
CHHS (n=132)	8%	24%	45%	24%
CHSS (n=546)	1%	8%	50%	41%
SCHAR (n=67)	0%	13%	45%	42%
BUSINESS (n=225)	1%	21%	52%	26%
Volgenau (n=275)	0%	9%	57%	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 1,528 respondents (native=716, transfer=812).

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 26% did so at least seven times (Table 2).
- Variation emerged by college ($p < .001$, Chi-square), with CVPA and CEHD's students reporting significantly more frequent contact with academic advisors by phone, email, or Skype (e.g., 42-48% for 7 times or more, compared to 8-30% for other colleges/schools) (Table 2).

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

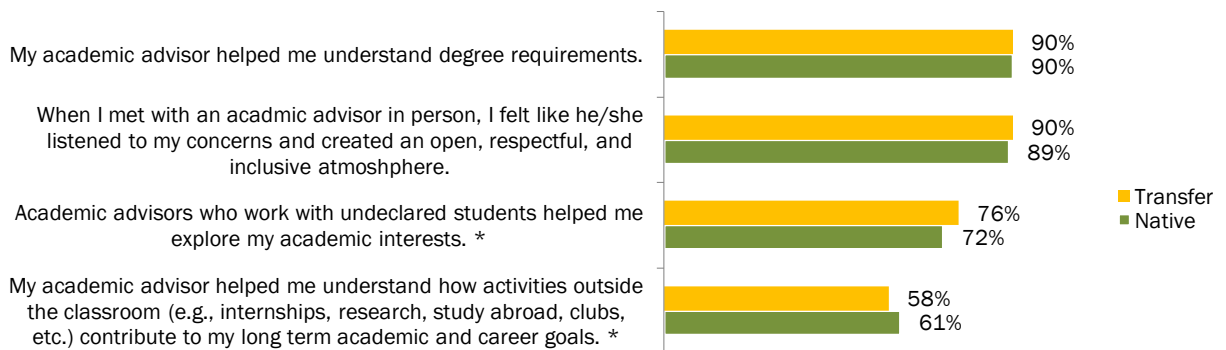
<i>How many times have you consulted with an academic advisor by phone, email, or Skype?</i>				
	0 times	1 - 2 times	3 - 6 times	7 times or more
Overall (n=1530) ¹	22%	20%	33%	26%
CVPA (n=79)	11%	10%	37%	42%
COS (n=132)	19%	18%	40%	23%
S-CAR (n=15)	7%	20%	53%	20%
CEHD (n=61)	12%	13%	28%	48%
CHHS (n=132)	20%	24%	30%	27%
CHSS (n=547)	19%	18%	33%	30%
SCHAR (n=67)	16%	30%	34%	19%
BUSINESS (n=226)	43%	23%	27%	8%
Volgenau (n=275)	18%	22%	33%	27%

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 overwhelming majority of the graduates (about 90%) strongly agreed or agreed that academic advisors helped them understand degree requirements and provided a caring and positive atmosphere when meeting with students (Figure 2).
- 76% 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 72% of native students (Figure 2).
- Native students were more likely than their transfer peers (61% and 58%, respectively) to acknowledge that academic advisors helped them understand how extracurricular activities contribute to their long term academic and career goals (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Perception of Academic Advising by Transfer Status



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 = 357-696; N for transfer = 382-781. * $p < .05$, t-test (two-tailed).

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*, *academic advising*, *involvement in campus activities*, *mentoring*, and *overall quality of course instruction* (Table 3).
- For example, students who had met with academic advisors at least seven times while they were at Mason gave higher rating on all satisfaction measures than their peers who never met or met less frequently with academic advisors (Table 3).

Table 3. 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
	0 times (1)	1-2 times (2)	3-6 times (3)	>=7 times (4)		
Sense of belonging at Mason	2.80	2.85	3.04	3.12	***	4>2; 3>2
Overall Mason experience	2.80	2.98	3.12	3.24	***	4>1,2,3; 3>1,2
Education you received in your major	3.00	3.22	3.30	3.41	***	4>1,2,3; 3>1
Academic advising	2.50	2.70	3.06	3.41	***	4>1,2,3; 3>1,2
Your level of involvement in campus activities	2.65	2.66	2.75	2.91	***	4>2,3
Career support from faculty and staff	2.45	2.82	2.87	2.97	**	4>1,2,3; 3>1
Preparation for work	2.70	2.86	2.91	3.01	*	4>2,3
Preparation for post-baccalaureate study	2.65	2.85	2.90	3.01	**	4>1,2,3
Mentoring	2.50	2.70	2.79	3.04	***	4>1,2,3
Overall quality of course instruction	2.85	3.11	3.17	3.30	***	4>1,2,3; 3>1
If you were to do it all over again, would you attend George Mason University?	2.60	3.18	3.23	3.27	**	4>1; 3>1; 2>1

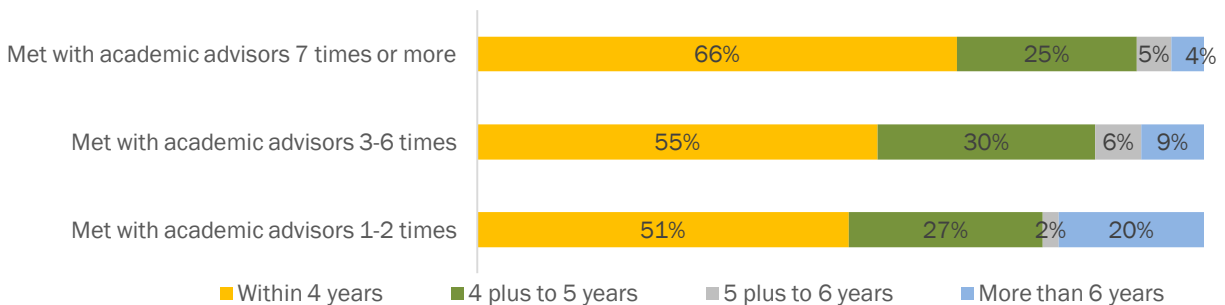
Rating scale for satisfaction measures: 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied). Numbers represent averages.

Based on students who responded to these questions. N for 0 times: 20; N for 1-2 times: 177-179; N for 3-6 times: 727-735; N for >=7 times: 553-558. * 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 (66%) than those who used the academic advising service less frequently (51-55%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Time-to-Degree by Frequency of Meeting with Academic Advisors



Based on 715 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 1-2 times: 45; N for 3-6 times: 314; N for >=7 times: 356. The "Met with academic advisors 0 times" category was excluded from the analysis due to small n (1).