

# Graduating Senior Survey 2019 – Selected Results on Academic Advising

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning | George Mason University  
December 2020

The Graduating Senior Survey (GSS) was administered to 5,710 seniors in the 2018-19 academic year (summer and fall 2018, spring 2019), with a response rate of 38%. This document presents selected results related to students' experience with and perception of academic advising. Reference to the previous year's results was made where appropriate to illustrate change over time. Complete GSS 2019 results for the university, by college/school, and by department are available at <https://oiep.gmu.edu/>.

## Highlights of Key Findings

- Almost one-half of the respondents reported meeting with their academic advisors 3-6 times while at Mason though the percentage varied by college/school.
- About one-third of the respondents also reported having technology-enabled contact with their academic advisors 3-6 times, with variation by college/school.
- During their last year at Mason, over one-half of the respondents reported using Degree Works<sup>1</sup> at least 7 times to track progress on degree completion, again with variation by college/school.
- Compared to 2018, some colleges/schools (e.g., CVPA) reported increased use of academic advising service in 2019 at the high end (meeting advisors seven times or more) whereas others experienced decreased use.
- The majority of the 2019 respondents (65-90%) had positive perception of/experience with academic advising, higher rates compared to 60-89% from the previous year.
- In general, students who met with academic advisors more frequently were more likely to report satisfaction with their Mason experience.
- The 2019 results did not reveal significant association between the frequency of meeting with academic advisors and time-to-degree.

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<sup>1</sup> Degree Works is the degree evaluation system used at Mason by students and advisors to track progress on meeting degree completion requirements (for students with a catalog year of Fall 2012 and later).

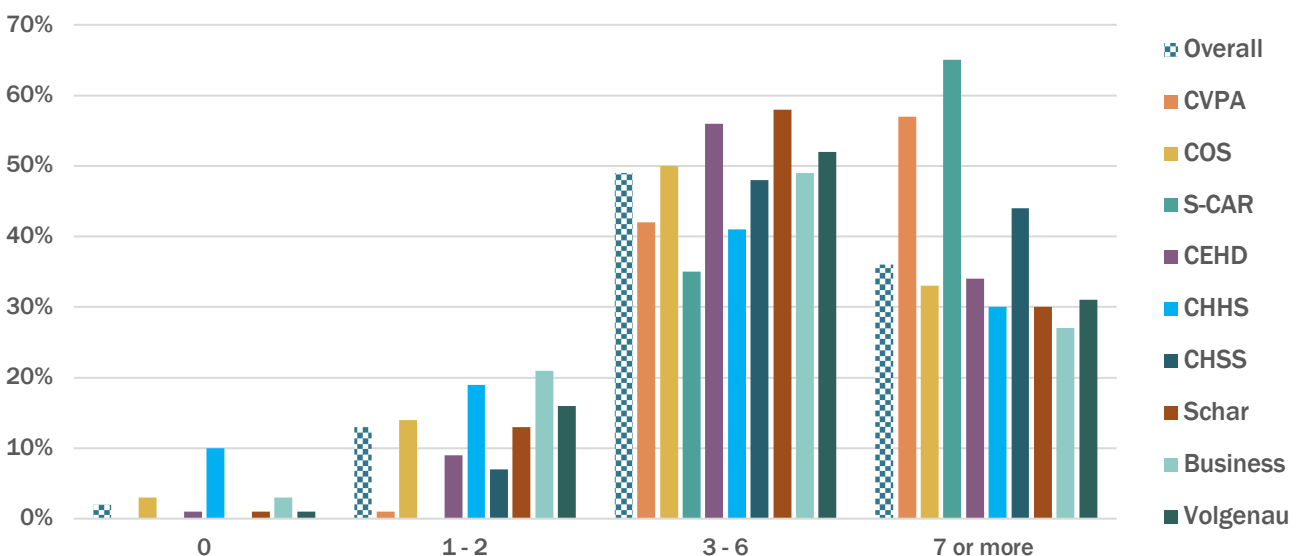
## Meeting with Academic Advisors

- Overall, about one-half of the respondents (49%) met with academic advisors 3-6 times while at Mason; another one-third (36%) did so at least 7 times. Only 2% of the respondents never met with academic advisors (Table 1 and Figure 1).
- The number of times students met with academic advisors in person varied significantly by college, with three colleges being above the institutional average at the higher end (i.e., 7 times or more: 44-65% and 36%, respectively) (Table 1 and Figure 1).
- Compared to 2018, COS and CEHD experienced a noticeable decrease at the higher end in 2019 (i.e., 7 times or more: decreased by 13% and 15%, respectively) (Table 1).

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

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

	0	1-2	3-6	7 or more
Overall (n=1991) <sup>1</sup>	2% (0)	13% (+1)	49% (0)	36% (-2)
CVPA (n=88)	0% (0)	1% (-2)	42% (-4)	57% (+6)
COS (n=198)	3% (-1)	14% (+3)	50% (+10)	33% (-13)
S-CAR (n=23)	0% (0)	0% (0)	35% (+2)	65% (-2)
CEHD (n=70)	1% (+1)	9% (-1)	56% (+13)	34% (-15)
CHHS (n=173)	10% (+5)	19% (-1)	41% (-13)	30% (+8)
CHSS (n=650)	<1% (0)	7% (-3)	48% (+1)	44% (+1)
Schar (n=71)	1% (+1)	11% (+3)	58% (+4)	30% (-8)
Business (n=298)	3% (+1)	21% (+3)	49% (-6)	27% (+2)
Volgenau (n=418)	1% (+1)	16% (+4)	52% (-2)	31% (-3)



<sup>1</sup> Students with double majors from two different colleges were counted once in calculating overall n and counted twice in calculating college n. Percentage comparisons significant at  $p < .001$ , Chi-square (2-sided). Unless specified otherwise, numbers in parenthesis represent % change since 2018 with "+" indicating increase and "-" indicating decrease. % change not reflected in Figure 1.

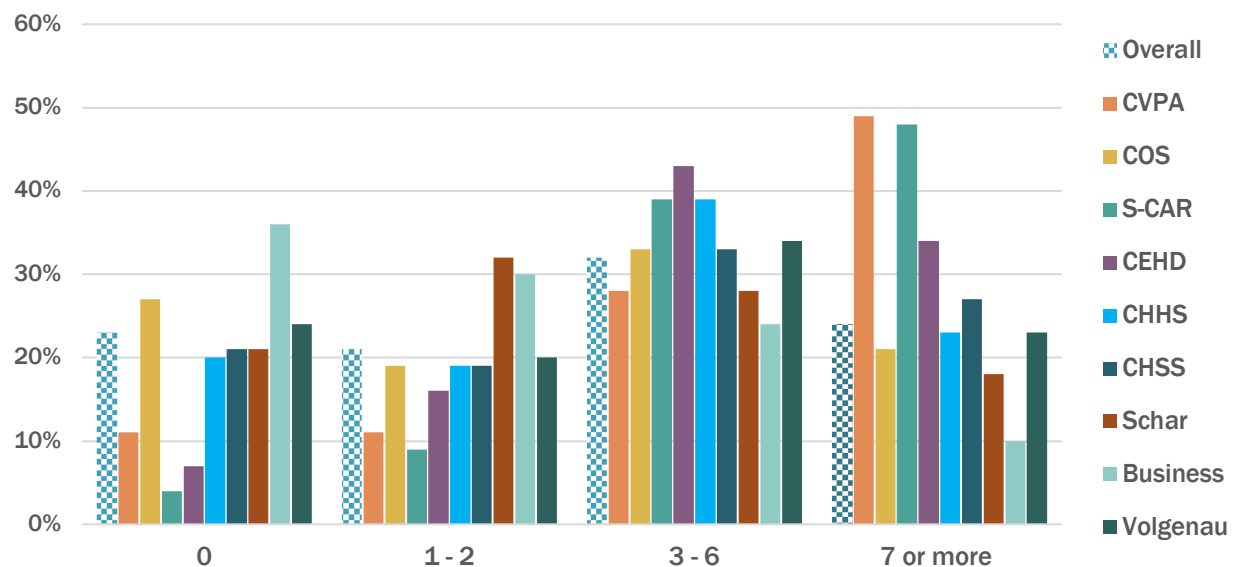
## Contacting Academic Advisors by Phone, Email, or Skype

- Overall, about one-third of the students contacted academic advisors 3-6 times for help by phone, email, or Skype while they were at Mason; another 24% did so at least seven times (Table 2 and Figure 2).
- Statistically significant variation emerged by college, with CVPA and S-CAR students reporting more frequent contact with academic advisors by phone, email, or Skype (e.g., 48-49% for 7 times or more, compared to 10-34% for other colleges/schools) (Table 2 and Figure 2).
- Compared to 2018, CVPA students reported the biggest increase at the higher end (i.e., 7 times or more: increase by 17%) (Table 2).

Table 2 and Figure 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?*

	0	1–2	3–6	7 or more
Overall (n=1985) <sup>1</sup>	23% (+1)	21% (+1)	32% (0)	24% (-2)
CVPA (n=88)	11% (-4)	11% (-4)	28% (-10)	49% (+17)
COS (n=197)	27% (+5)	19% (-2)	33% (+3)	21% (-6)
S-CAR (n=23)	4% (-10)	9% (-10)	39% (+20)	48% (0)
CEHD (n=70)	7% (-8)	16% (+8)	43% (+13)	34% (-13)
CHHS (n=172)	20% (-1)	19% (-6)	38% (+6)	23% (+1)
CHSS (n=649)	21% (+2)	19% (0)	33% (-1)	27% (-2)
Schar (n=71)	21% (-1)	32% (+3)	28% (-4)	18% (0)
Business (n=297)	36% (-1)	30% (+8)	24% (-6)	10% (-1)
Volgenau (n=416)	24% (+2)	20% (+1)	34% (+2)	23% (-4)



<sup>1</sup> Students with double majors from two different colleges were counted once in calculating overall n and counted twice in calculating college n. Percentage comparisons significant at  $p < .001$ , Chi-square (2-sided). Unless specified otherwise, numbers in parenthesis represent % change since 2018 with "+" indicating increase and "-" indicating decrease. % change not reflected in Figure 2.

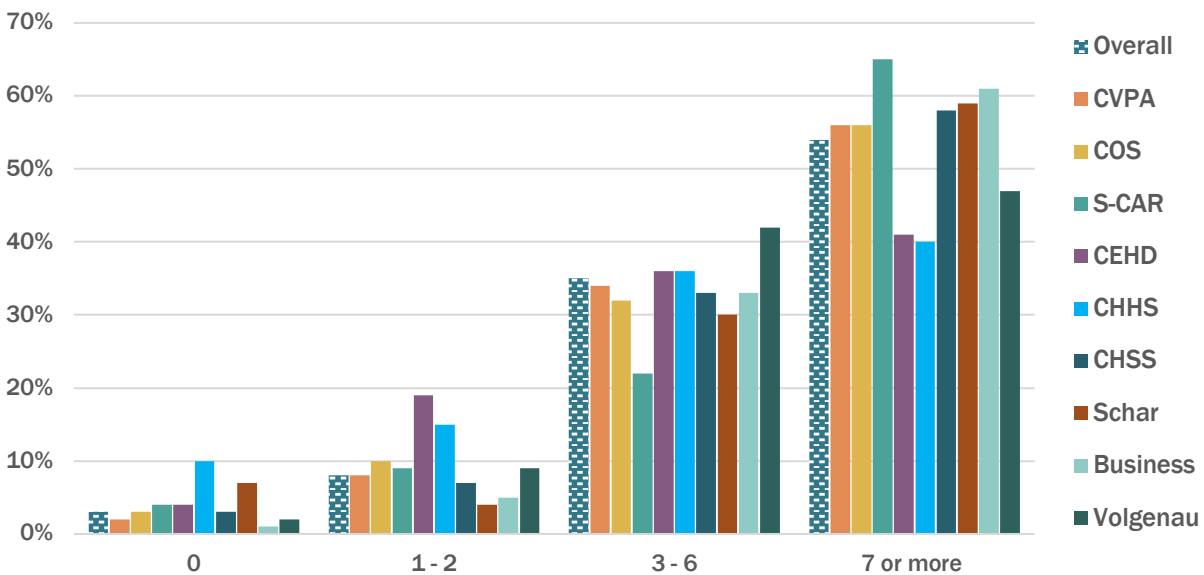
## Using Degree Works in the Senior Year

- Overall, over one-half of the students (54%) used Degree Works at least seven times during their last year at Mason; another one-third (35%) did so 3-6 times (Table 3 and Figure 3).
- Statistically significant variation emerged by college, with six colleges being above the institutional average at the higher end (i.e., 7 times or more: 56-65% and 54%, respectively) (Table 3 and Figure 3).
- CVPA students reported the biggest increase in using Degree Works: 56% have used it at least 7 times in 2019, an 18% increase over 2018 (Table 3).

Table 3 and Figure 3: Using Degree Works during Last Year at Mason: Overall and by College

*How many times have you used Degree Works during your last year at Mason?*

	0	1–2	3–6	7 or more
Overall (n=1990) <sup>1</sup>	3% (0)	8% (-1)	35% (0)	54% (0)
CVPA (n=88)	2% (-2)	8% (-1)	34% (-15)	56% (+18)
COS (n=198)	3% (+1)	10% (+1)	32% (-1)	56% (0)
S-CAR (n=23)	4% (-1)	9% (-1)	22% (-2)	65% (+3)
CEHD (n=70)	4% (+2)	19% (+8)	36% (-9)	41% (-1)
CHHS (n=172)	10% (+3)	15% (-5)	36% (-1)	40% (+4)
CHSS (n=650)	3% (-1)	7% (0)	33% (0)	58% (+3)
Schar (n=71)	7% (+2)	4% (-4)	30% (+8)	59% (-6)
Business (n=298)	1% (-1)	5% (-1)	33% (+4)	61% (-3)
Volgenau (n=418)	2% (0)	9% (+1)	42% (+1)	47% (-2)

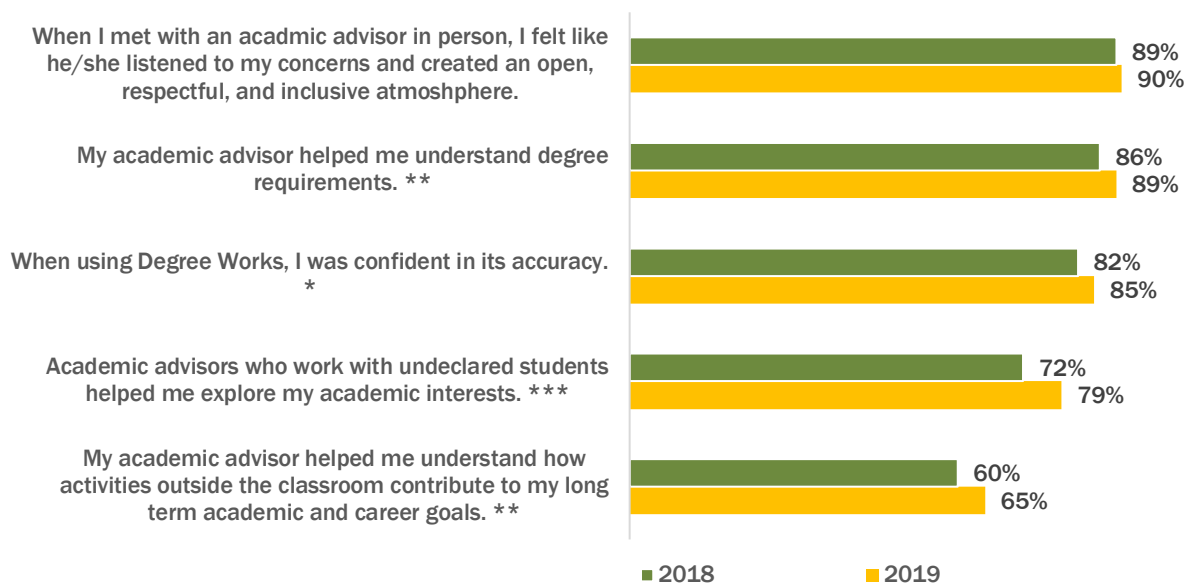


<sup>1</sup> Students with double majors from two different colleges were counted once in calculating overall n and counted twice in calculating college n. Percentage comparisons significant at  $p < .001$ , Chi-square (2-sided). Unless specified otherwise, numbers in parenthesis represent % change since 2018 with "+" indicating increase and "-" indicating decrease. % change not reflected in Figure 3.

## Perception of Academic Advising

- About 90% of the 2019 respondents strongly agreed or agreed that academic advisors helped them understand degree requirements and provided a caring and positive atmosphere when meeting with them (Figure 4).
- Compared to 2018, a significantly higher percentage of respondents in 2019 reported a positive perception of/experience with academic advising on four of the five measures, including how academic advisors helped them understand the connection between outside classroom activities and their academic and career goals (60% vs. 65%) and explore their academic interests if they had not declared a major (72% vs. 79%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Perception of Academic Advising: 2018 vs. 2019



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 2018 = 754-1535; N for 2019 = 963-1917. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , proportion test (2-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 academic advising, education received in their major, career support from faculty and staff, and mentoring (Table 4).
- For example, students who had met with academic advisors at least seven times while they were at Mason gave higher rating on most satisfaction measures than their peers who never met or met less frequently with academic advisors (Table 4).

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

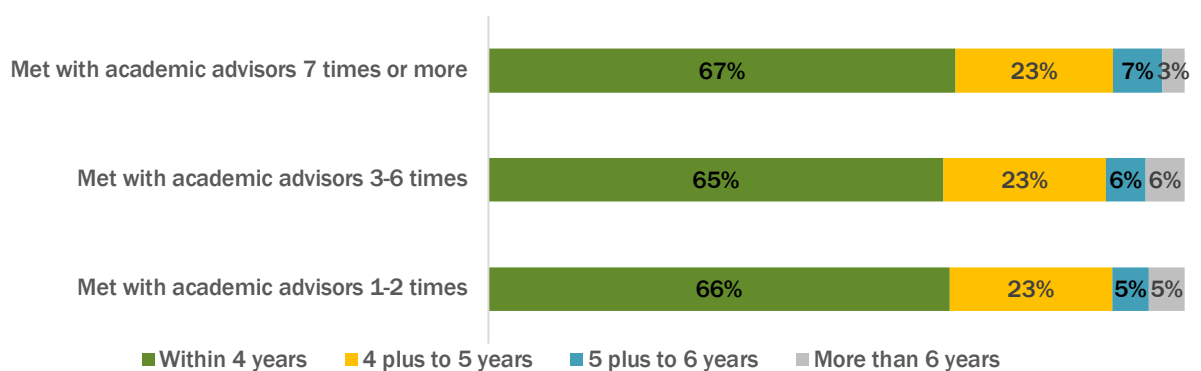
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your education at Mason?	Times Meeting with Academic Advisor				Sig.	Post Hoc Comparison
	0 (1)	1-2 (2)	3-6 (3)	>=7 (4)		
Sense of belonging at Mason	2.90	2.93	3.04	3.06		
Overall Mason experience	2.98	3.00	3.11	3.16	**	4>2; 3>2
Education you received in your major	3.18	3.16	3.26	3.38	***	4>2,3; 3>2
Academic advising	2.70	2.84	3.12	3.40	***	4>1,2,3; 3>1,2
Your level of involvement in campus activities	2.68	2.70	2.85	2.92	**	4>2; 3>2
Career support from faculty and staff	2.75	2.73	2.89	2.99	***	4>2,3; 3>2
Preparation for work	2.83	2.81	2.93	2.99	**	4>2; 3>2
Preparation for post-baccalaureate study	2.85	2.82	2.97	2.98	*	4>2; 3>2
Mentoring	2.63	2.64	2.85	2.93	***	4>1,2,3; 3>2
If you were to do it all over again, would you attend George Mason University? <sup>1</sup>	3.13	3.05	3.15	3.19		

<sup>1</sup> Rating scale: 1 (Definitely Not) to 4 (Definitely Yes); rating scale for other satisfaction measures: 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied). Numbers represent averages. Based on students who responded to these questions. N for 0 times: 40; N for 1-2 times: 243-248; N for 3-6 times: 944-952; N for >=7 times: 704-707. \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001, ANOVA.

### Academic Advising and Time-to-Degree

- The 2019 results did not reveal significant association between the frequency of meeting with academic advisors and time-to-degree (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Time-to-Degree by Frequency of Meeting with Academic Advisors



Based on 919 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: 77; N for 3-6 times: 407; N for >=7 times: 435. The "Met with academic advisors 0 times" category was excluded from the analysis due to small n (6).